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A HISTORY OF INDIAN CIVILISATION

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A HISTORY OF INDIAN CIVILISATION

Volume : III

Part : II

(Political History of Modern India)

MINTO TO INDIRA GANDHI

K.P. BAHADUR

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First Published : 1982

Rs. 250.00

Published by

Sheel Sethi (Mrs.)
for Ess Ess Publications,
4237/24, Ansari Road,
New Delhi-110002.

Printed at

S. Narayan & Sons, Delhi.

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This book is dedicated to
my beloved son
SANJAY
(*24 February 1958—26 May 1980*)

and my beloved daughter
SANDHYA
(*16 October 1963—17 March 1979*)

niṣṭhur saundaryya āj mukhē prakṛtir,
mamtā-vihīn hās, upahās tāra,
dviguṇa vyaṭhāya bharē vyathit hṛdaya,
śokārtta dbūlāya yabē ḍhālē aśru nīr
kōthāya bahichhē dhārā samavēdanār,
ōhē viśvarūpa dēva, ōhē sarbbamaya ?

Kāmini Rāya

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Introduction

'The ministers should not try to unduly influence the local officers and should not make any statement which tends to undermine the respect for authority.'

Don't For Ministers : Note prepared
by the Union Ministry.[1]

When Curzon left India in 1905 an epoch of British coercion ended. Minto's viceroyalty seemed to usher in an era of reform. But when the reforms came one after the other—those of 1909, 1919, 1935, the Cripps offer of 1942 and the Cabinet Mission—Indians soon realised that they were being taken for a ride. It was the husk and not the grain which the British rulers wished to give. The disillusionment was made all the more acute, curiously by the British themselves. Macaulay's mania for westernising Indian education was given concete shape by British administrators. The Indians responded enthusiastically, and avidly devoured the teachings of John Stuart Mill, Rousseau and other champions of liberty. That made them even thirstier for freedom. It was an Englishman who founded the Congress, and most of India's national leaders had a top class English education.

1 UNI, *The Pioneer* 18 June 1982.

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With a medley of languages (the Indian constitution recognises 15) and many diverse communities, often working against each other, India has rightly been called a sub-continent. Recently there was so much opposition from the South to giving a Hindi name, *akash vani* to the All India Radio, that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi hurriedly reverted to the English version without consulting the minister concerned, who had gone abroad at that time. The caste Hindus and scheduled castes are always suspicious of each other. At the Round Table Conference of 12 November 1930, B.R. Ambedkar, leader of the depressed classes, demanded that they should be treated as a separate community.[2] Muslims never seemed to get over the shock of being ousted as rulers by the British. When a deputation of Muslims led by the Aga Khan, met Minto, one of their demands was adequate representation in the local bodies and legislatures, not merely proportionate to their number but also considering their political importance as well as 'the position which they occupied in India a little more than a hundred years ago'. Another fear which seems to have gripped the Muslims was that if ever they had the misfortune to live under a Hindu rule, they would be persecuted. They could never conceive of a secular state. Sir Syed Ahmed, the Muslim leader, thought that if ever the British withdrew, there would be a confrontation between Muslims and Hindus. He said:

'Now suppose that all the English were to leave India, then who would be rulers of India? Is it possible that under these circumstances two nations, the Mohammedan and the Hindu, could sit on the same throne and remain equal in power? Most certainly not. It is necessary that one of them should conquer the other and thrust it down. To hope that both could remain equal is to desire the impossible and the inconceivable'.

The Muslim religion was militant. It could not tolerate the existence of any other. That is why a Muslim conquest

2 *The History and Culture of Indian People* (ed.) R.C. Majumdar, Bhavan, 1969, Vol. XI, p. 479.

3 *Ibid* vol. X. 309, *op cit.*

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was a bloody affair, in which the victims were not only soldiers, but the civil population as well. Infidels who were stubborn enough not to accept the glory of Islam were unceremoniously killed, temples were plundered and idols smashed. Women were raped and dishonoured, so that most of them burnt themselves, preferring death to disgrace. With this concept of a 'conquest', one can understand why Muslims were so apprehensive about the possibility of being ruled by those to whom they had done all this. Their fears were, of course, unfounded, for unlike Islam, Hinduisn is a non-aggressive faith. Even after these fears led to Muslims insisting on a separate country for themselves, the thirteen million Muslims living in India are enjoying equal rights with Hindus as India's citizens.[4]

The British had to rule India from miles away, and that too with a handful of administrators to whom the Indian climate must have seemed most exacting. They obviously had to exploit the weaknesses of those whom they governed. Of these weaknesses they found two as most prominent. One was disunity. the other the awe created by pomp and splendour. And they took advantage of both. They did not divide and rule in the sense of creating something which did not exist. But they widened the crevices. Of the Muslim delegation and their demand for separate electorates, Minto the viceroy, wrote to the British monarch in December 1906, 'The Mohammedan movement has done a great deal of good in making it clear that there are other factors to consider besides mere Bengali interests'.[5] English viceroys like Curzon, and administrators such as Brigadier-general R.E.H. Dyer who caused the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, tried to crush the Congress and the Indian national movement, while they kept making the Muslim League stronger. The Cabinet Mission which, coming straight from England, could be deemed to be impartial reached the conclusion

4 Increase in the Muslim population was about 31 per cent between 1961-71 i.e. an average yearly increase of above 3 per cent. Percentage of Muslims in 1971 was 11.20. Hence percentage of Muslims has been taken as about 15 in 1981's Indian population of 684 million.

5 Minto Papers, Minto to the King, 12 December 1906.

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that Pakistan was not feasible. The Mission gave weighty reasons to support its view. Even then Jinnah was successful in wresting his Pakistan. When Lord Wavell was near a solution which did not include partition, and Jinnah was about to agree, a message was sent to him from the 'cell' of British Civil Servants (with the assent of the high-ups in England) that if he kept out he would be given his Pakistan.[6]

Pakistan, however, was not entirely the consequence of British designs and of Jinnah's insistence. It came also because of the lukewarm-ness of Indian national leaders in opposing it. The British found their stay in India no longer worthwhile, and wanted to clear out quick. They sent Mountabatten who determined to accomplish operation hand over by a fixed date of which he kept reminding himself and everyone by a special calendar on his desk. He found Jinnah adamant and Nehru and Gandhi yielding. The British were hardly bothered about what happened to India after they left, so long as they could leave. If Gandhi and Nehru had given a firm no to Pakistan, the future history of India might have been different. But they didn't, and Jinnah had his way.

The other thing the British rulers noticed was that India was still in the feudalistic age when the majesty of courts and kings brought forth reverence and awe. In a way it was the legacy of the Muslim rulers, who put democratic institutions into cold storage. So, at least in the beginning, they took care to maintain the grandeur of Government Houses and held durbars in the Mughal style. They patronised nawabs, princes and taluqdars, and themselves followed the same tradition. Even after the British have gone we do not seem to have quite shaken off this tendency. We still have guards of honour for VIPs, cars with flags and red and blue lights (red for non-police VIPs, blue for the police) gateways and arches; and in fact the visiting room of every big officer and politician is almost a durbar in miniature. Maybe *we* find all this as useful in keeping our governments intact as the British did in maintaining their rule.

The British rulers were overbearing and repressive, but they

6 Durga Das, *India from Curzon to Nehru & After*, Collins, 1969, p. 216.

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gave India an administrative and a legal system which has continued after independence with very little change. In quite a few matters they perhaps understood us better than we understand ourselves. The Simon Commission, writing in 1930 about the defects of local government observed : 'There is on the part of elected persons a general tendency to meddle and interfere in details of administration which should be left entirely to the paid official.'[7] Pointing out the characteristics of the election system as practised in India the Report said : 'While in some instances electors have recorded a strong verdict on corrupt and inefficient administration, we are, on the whole, of opinion that questions of administration play little part in the elections and that communal, caste and personal considerations furnish in the majority of cases the motive power which takes the elector to the polling booth'.[8] Finally commenting on the finances of local bodies the Commission said 'The most disturbing feature, however, is the failure to collect the direct taxes imposed. In Great Britain, a municipality expects to collect up to 98 or 99 per cent of the rates imposed by it, and a drop in collection to 95 per cent would be subject of very close enquiry. But in municipalities in India...uncollected arrears have been mounting up to very large sums'. Even after the gulf of years these remarks still apply with justice to India's administration.

Mahatma Gandhi's non-cooperation campaign continued like a tape-recorder whose stop button is depressed off and on. Stopping suddenly when he cried halt, it went torturously along, culminating in the Quit India movement of 1942. It was the second world war however more than anything else, that made the British keen again for fulfilling Indian aspirations. There was the abortive Cripps Mission of March 1942 followed by the Cabinet Mission of March 1946. Finally there came the decision of the British government to leave India. On 15 August 1947 India became free and Pakistan was born. Freedom came to India at midnight, and ushering it Jawaharlal

7 *The Evolution of India and Pakistan 1858 to 1947* (ed.) C.H. Philips and Dr B.N. Pandey, Oxford, 1962, p 288,

8 *Ibid*, p. 290.

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Nehru the first prime minister, said that India had woken when the world slept. But it turned out to be a brief awakening.

Thirty-five years of freedom has not been able to push India from the developing group to the developed one. Except in population, the advance made in other spheres has been marginal. One can't say we have not progressed. It is not the quantum of progress which is wanting, but the quality.

The main reasons for the failure appear to be population rise, inaction, and inefficiency, illiteracy and lack of civic sense, and finally, what is called a 'world phenomenon', corruption. Control of population has become a complicated problem for India because of being entangled with politics. Pursued with great zeal during the emergency but without eliciting public support, it led to a lot of unpleasantness, and was one of the factors responsible for the Congress debacle. Since then the politician's attitude to family planning has been one of caution. There is a lot of talk about it, and the sixth plan has provided Rs 1,010 crore for family planning (as against Rs 284.41 crore in the fourth plan and Rs 408.98 crore in the fifth). But if one judges the programme by the achievement, it is getting us nowhere. There has been a steady rise in population. The percentage growth in the last decade (1971-81) was 24.75 accounting for about 136 million people. Allowing for a small increase in this growth rate (it has almost always been on the up), India's population should be about 1,000 million by the end of the century. And for this achievement the taxpayers will have paid crores of rupees! The reasons for the failure of family planning have been discussed in detail in the book, and it is not proposed to repeat them here. But perhaps the greatest one of these has been given by the Indian government itself. The family welfare programme in India says a government source book of information, 'depends on its voluntary acceptance by the people'.[9] In India no one does anything voluntarily,

9 *India 1981, A Reference Annual*, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and broadcasting, Government of India, p. 107.

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even the things citizens the world over do, like following traffic signs, walking on the right side of the road and putting rubbish in garbage cans. That does not mean that one should catch hold of all men, whether needing family planning or not, and vasectomise them. But a certain amount of 'coercive persuasion' seems to be indicated unless India wishes to retain her unenvied precedence on the world population map.

Although one can't generalise, most of the people in India could be divided into two categories—those who do not work and those employed in work which is unproductive. Among the non-workers are those whom the government classifies as unemployed. There were 14.3 million job seekers on the live registers of employment exchanges in 1979 as compared to 3.4 million in 1969. Thus there was an increase of 10.9 million in a period of 10 years—an average increase of over a million a year. By 1982, therefore, there would be about 17.3 million persons unemployed out of India's 684 million.[10] These are those who have no jobs at all. The actual number is bound to be higher because employment exchanges exist only in urban areas, and the landless persons in villages who can't find labour are not on their list. Besides many are jobless but do not get themselves registered in the employment exchanges due to various difficulties (of which corruption in the exchanges is also one). Then there are, what one may term, the 'working non-workers'. Most of these will be found in the innumerable government offices dotting Indian cities. The working non-worker leisurely strolls into office almost an hour late and spends three hours out of the six in gossip, tea and snacks, and sometimes, if he is a cricket lover, bringing along a small transistor to listen to the commentary (the girls bring their knitting instead). Much the same happens in field-work. The official or minister who gives one pep-talk in a village in the day, feels he has done his day's work (apart from the durbar which awaits his return to the inspection house). Finally there are what we may call the 'non-working workers'. They are the

10 *nIdia 1981*, Publications Division, p. 164.

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ones in government offices who arrive at 9 in the morning and leave for home at 9 in the night to face a frustrated wife who has remained husband less daylong. When the 'non-working worker' rises from bed the children are on their way to school. By the time he is back they are asleep. This 12 hour workday, relieved only by an hour or so of lunchbreak, passes mostly in mammoth meetings with coffee, cold drinks and lunch packets in which long speeches give expression to the officers's worth (many go without a word for they have been roped in merely out of fear they *may* have some distant connection with the subject and their absence might irk the minister). Besides the meetings, there are the 'speak' files to speak, the sudden summons by the boss just when one is warming up to a long winded note, the requisition for 'important information' (which usually comes when most of the clerks have left office, and which whenever it reaches whoever asks for it, is just 'seen and and filed'), and the long long dreary statements and figures (all wrong) which adorn files. There is the minister too who sits through *abhinandans* (welcome songs and addresses) with garlands with which he has been garlanded in a bunch on the table or reposing with his P.A. to be placed behind the VIP car's back glass window; and then of course the tea or the lunch or the dinner. After this 'strenuous' labour the non-working worker (he is usually someone at the top), is amazed to find the prices going up and up, the production going down, the cities as dirty, open-manhole-riddled, encroached and littered with rubbish as before; fields without irrigation, industries without power and people without sustenance. Lest the picture be too pessimistic, one should hasten to add that there are some working workers too, but as the saying goes, one swallow does not make a summer.

The position about illiteracy (with which is bound up with civic sense) is no better. The illiterates have more than doubled in the last 30 years,[11] and out of 1,000 persons 467 were illiterate in 1981. Considering the progressive increase (about 7.2 per

11 *India 1981*, Publications Division, p. 9 (1951 : 16-67 per cent 1981 : 36-17 per cent. Table 1.4).

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year during 1971-81) there would be about 474 people illiterate out of 1,000 by now.[11a] This means that soon almost every second person in India will be illiterate. The meaning of illiteracy is taken as follows : 'a person is deemed as literate if he or she can read and write with understanding in any language. A person who can merely read but cannot write is not defined as literate. Children below five years of age were treated as illiterate.[12] One can imagine what civic sense, education, democracy and even progress, can mean to a person who cannot even write his name.

Finally there is corruption, which does not merely mean gifts and bribes but also favouritism, casteism, *sifarish* (recommendation), dodging taxes and generating black money. Although corruption is known in some form or the other the world over, the Indian brand has developed distinctive features. It has become a way of life. In the British times it was confined to a certain category of officials. When one rose higher, say to the rank of a deputy collector, he eschewed money in order to maintain what was more prized—*izzat*. Today, after thirty-five years of independence, corruption has reached the ministers, and top officers of almost all departments. To get everything—a job, a permit, a contract, a payment due, transfer, promotion, the starting and the running of a business or even such small things as a berth on a train or getting through a file—all require one of the weapons in the armoury of corruption, money, *sifarish*, caste, or favouritism. It is sad, but it is there. Another feature of Indian corruption is its complete recklessness. Whether it is a private work or a national project, a road or a bridge or a venture of the Housing Board, all is grist for the mill of corruption. The result is, roads begin to crack up shortly after they are made, houses in government colonies start leaking and shedding their plaster soon after they are built, and even food articles are adulterated with harmful substances, regardless of the hazard to human life. It is graded corruption all around. The peon is content with one figure, the clerk with two or three, the officer with four or five, the minister with

11a ibid, Table 1.5.
12 *India 1981*, Publications Division, p. 9.

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six or more. There are raids, traps, inquiries and prosecutions, but ultimately those who are nabbed are the one to three figure ones. The top brass are left free to play their tune. Yet another feature of Indian corruption is that without it the wheels will not move at all. In other countries a little tip will get extra service. With us even the rightful things are beyond reach except by *sifarish* or influence (*pauwa*, as it is familiarly called) or a '*hara* note' (a Rs 100 banknote) quietly slipped beneath the application. *Nothing at all* can be had without corruption.

Of our evils, the population explosion is the most menacing. But the others are baden ough. And they all form a vicious circle which it is difficult to break. People don't work, so there is poverty and malnutrition. Because of malnutrition they work even less. Illiteracy results in the absence of civic sense, unemployment and corruption. Corruption whisks away the earnings of the state, so that there isn't enough money to educate people and illiteracy increases. Thus rotates the Indian merry-go round of evils, each evil eternally chasing the other. To break this circle the only way is hard-work, sustained unrelenting work in which there is less paper work and greater decision, fewer orders and more implementation, more earnestness less advertisement, and in which corruption has no place, or if it must have one, only a tiny niche. It is work alone that makes a small country like Japan master of the world trade. A Japanece Labour Ministry Board of Inquiry recently recommended revision of the Labour Standards Act because of 'increasing criticism abroad that Japanese "work alcoholics" give the country an unfair economic advantage internationally. The study revealed that Japan lead in average total work hours a year at 2,162 against 1,888 hours for American workers 1,887 for British workers and 1,728 hours for those of West Germany.[13] But even if somehow we manage to get rid of illiteracy, poverty, and unemployment, sloth and corruption, we will be just marking time on the field of progress, unless we can limit our population. From this dismal, and perhaps too censorious a portrayal, one

13 *The Pioneer*, 21 June 1982, *A Limit to Hard Work.*

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can hopefully turn to the achievements of India's art and culture. But that takes us to a separate volume.[14]

A History of Indian Civilisation is planned in six volumes, four of which are already out. It is meant to be a complete and comprehensive work covering both political developments and culture and civilisation in India from the earliest times to 1982. The present volume, the fifth in the series, gives the political history from Lord Minto (19 November 1905) to the present day. Though every attempt has been made to avoid repetition, some of it was inevitable, and for it the author craves his readers's indulgence. It is also inevitable that in narrating present day affairs the author becomes the chronicler.

It is hoped that this work will be useful for graduate and post-graduate students and for those preparing for competitions and will also be of interest to the general reader. The author is grateful to the publisher for bringing out the book in an attractive format with numerous illustrations.

Lucknow
Summer 1982

K.P. Bahadur

14 Author's *A History of Indian Civilisation*, vol. 3 part 3, Ess Ess. Publications.

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CONTENTS

Introduction vii

1 Lord Minto II (1905-10) 1

2 From Repression to Freedom: Lord Hardinge to Lord Mountbatten 39

3 The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms 1919 215

4 The Government of India Act 1935 233

5 Anglo-Afghan Relations 255

6 Some Aspects of the Indian National Movement 271

7 Independent India 329

8 The Five-Year Plans 369

9 Foreign Affairs and Foreign Policy 417

10 The Home Scene 475

11 Legislation Since Independence

12 Outlook for the Future 623

Bibliography 669

Index 671

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1

Lord Minto II (1905-10)

'No matter what is done for India, it would be no more than drawing our hands through water. Will your reform policy, natives on my Council, decentralisation, economising of taxation, and the rest of your virtuous deeds, really make a pin of difference in their feelings about British rule ?'

John Morley to Lord Minto, 15 August, 1907

1. Curzon's Legacy

Frustration gripped Lord Curzon when he was about to depart from India. With bad grace, he did not give his successor, Lord Minto, the usual ceremonial reception at Bombay. Instead of going out in the veranda to receive him, he made him wait in his drawing room ten minutes before coming out 'in a short coat and a pair of slippers and Lady Curzon did not curtsy to Lord Minto.'[1] As for Indians they thought it a good riddance. With all his anti-India sentiments, Curzon had created such an allergy in them that the mere mention of his name was 'a red rag to nine-tenths of the population of India.'[2] He was not altogether bad of course, never pardoning racial

1 Stanley A Wolpert, *Morley and India*, California, 1967, p. 39.
2 M.N. Das, *India under Morley and Minto*, Allen and Unwin, 1964, p. 16.

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animosity, persistently championing the cause of Indians who were oppressed by their white masters, even though none of the Englishmen in India shared his concern. The fault of lack of sympathy for Indians lay not with Curzon alone, but with all English administrators, as the Prince of Wales observed after his Indian tour. He noticed disapprovingly 'the ungracious bearing of Europeans to Indians, which was not the same as that of superiors to inferiors in England, but much worse.'[3]

Unfortunately Curzon was egoistic and overbearing, unmindful of what the enlightened Indians thought about his acts and policies, and too haughty to give them a hearing. He carried out unwise measures like the Bengal partition and the Calcutta Corporation Act which, being concerned with Bengal alone, gave the impression that he was trying to suppress the awakened consciousness of educated Bengalis.

The political upheaval which gathered momentum after Curzon, was not, however, caused by the partition alone. It started long before with the Ilbert's bill in Ripon's time and even earlier. Conquests, annexations, subsidiary alliances, and the whole gamut of British expansionism, the distrust and scorn shown to Indians and the continual harping on western superiority, had sickened the people. They tried to get rid of the foreign yoke in the revolt of 1857 which, because of various reasons, failed. The Queen's proclamation was meant to be a salve for new wounds. But the subsequent performance belied the hope that the rulers and the ruled would come closer. After taking a midday nap British imperialism woke fresh as ever. The high-handed action in Manipur, Baroda, Burma and Tibet, the calculated efforts to keep out natives from the Indian Civil Service, the double standards in administering justice, the determination to impede true representative government and the callous indifference to the miseries of the people; convinced Indians that they could never get a fair deal. To blame the partition for all that happened after Curzon is like saying the greased cartridges were the cause of the Indian revolt.

3 *Ibid*, p. 25.

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Another reason for the political ferment is often said to be the dissemination of western ideas among educated Indians. Commenting on 'the new spirit abroad in India' Morley oberved in one of his budget speeches in the English parliament 'How could you expect anything else? You have now been educating the people for years with western ideas and literature.'[4] He thought the danger was from 'educated men armed with modern ideas supplied from the noblest arsenals and proudest trophies of English literature and English oratory.'[5] In 1891, however, a census was taken according to which out of a total population of 262,328,956 the literates were 12,071,249 and only 537,811 persons were English-knowing.[6] The impact of education, much less of western education was, therefore, insignificant. The new spirit was not confined to the infinitesimal educated class. It was the awakening of the masses.

The agitation, protests and disorder, it is true originated in Bengal against which the partition and other acts were levelled. But so did every other thing, including the beginnings of English rule and thrust of British exploitation. Soon however agitation spread to the Punjab which had remained loyal in 1857 and which provided most of the Indian soldiers for the British army; and from the Punjab it spread all over, giving it the character of a true national movement. The reasons which led to it were not merely western ideas, English education, partition, or measures like the Calcutta Corporation and the Universities Acts. More than these were the economic unrest caused by the wealth drain from India, the despoilation of spinners, weavers and of all those engaged in indigenous industries, the steep rise in prices, low wages and mounting unemployment.

Instead of trying to improve the condition of the people, the English masters began to oppress them all the more. When Lord Ampthill's ADC at Delhi kicked a coolie so hard that the poor man died, the affair was hushed up with a minor fine of Rs 100, and it was said the ADC's kick was only a 'push

4 Budget speech, 20 July 1906. Quoted in Stanley A Wolpert, *Morley and India*, California, 1967, p. 98.

5 Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 154.

6 Ram Gopal, *British Rule in India*, Asia Publishing House, 1963, p. 222.

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with the foot.'[7] The 'push' became with Indians a sarcastic comment on British savagery, just as with the British 'Pande', the name of the first mutineer in 1857, became a sobriquet for all future rebels. English soldiers shot at Indians just for fun. Those who killed for some reason, got off unpunished or with token punishments. When a European nurse was murdered by a Mohammedan servant, a young corporal 'took his rifle and shot and killed the first Indian he met.'[8] When Annie Besant head of the Hindu Central College Benares issued an appeal to the government 'to check the hatred that divides, heart from heart, community from community'[9] instead of giving weight to it, the lieutenant governor tried to stop contributions to her college, in order to bring pressure on her to desist from such utterances.

Not content with persecuting Indians, the British rulers struck upon a plan of dividing them. This was not a new idea. The policy of divide and rule had been devised by the English right from the time they set foot in India. But it began as an instrument of political division brought about by supporting rival candidates to the throne, pitching one ruler against another, and so forth. After the revolt of 1857 and a new turn was given by using it for creating religious rather than political division. Most of the English officers who had remained through the troubled period of the revolt, blamed Muslims more than Hindus for it. The local authorities in Rohilkhand, Agra and Aligarh, reported that Muslims were 'for the most part against us', while the Hindus remained 'almost universally friendly.'[10] Raikes, who was at Agra, said the Muslims had behaved so badly that 'if the rest of the population had sympathised with them, instead of antagonised, I should despair of governing India for the future'.[11] All over the

7 M.N. Das, *India Under Morley and Minto*, Allen and Unwin, 1964, p. 23.

8 *Ibid*, p. 27.

9 *Ibid*, p. 28.

10 Thomas R. Metcalf, *The Aftermath of the Revolt*, Princeton, 1965, p. 298 *op. cit.*

11 *Ibid, op. cit.*

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North-Western Provinces, he added, 'a Mohammedan was another word for a rebel.[12] Through the *Hindu Patriot*, Hindus defended their Muslim brethren from the Englishmen's unreasoned charge of disloyalty.[13] But the English rulers, nevertheless, punished them by reducing their patronage, and keeping them out of superior posts to which Indians were entitled. By 1886 in Bengal there were only 9 Muslims out of a total of 273 in the judicial service, and only 44 out of 249 on the executive side.[14]

The British animosity to Muslims gradually faded out. In fact with the passage of time they discovered how wrong they were. It was the Hindus who were the greater problem, not the Muslims. It was they who could not keep quiet about the scuttling of the Ilbert Bill, the enactment of measures like the Vernacular Press Act, the Arms Act and the checks on representative government. The Ilbert bill controversy had been confined by the Indians mainly to the press. But the European and the Anglo-Indian community created disorder before their own viceroy and even planned to kidnap him and send him back to England! Thus it was Englishmen themselves who showed the way to agitation. Hardly had the controversy on the Ilbert bill died, when Surendranath Banerjee was indicted in the Calcutta High Court for commenting on the conduct of Norris, its chief justice, who had ordered a Hindu to produce the image of his deity in the court. When he was incarcerated, some among the crowd of students gathered outside, smashed the windows of the court building. Twenty thousand people later attended a protest meeting.

At the opening of the twentieth century Curzon's repressive measures had made the position even worse. But by this time, the English had perfected the other weapon of divide and rule on the basis of religion. The partition of Bengal was not really the partition of a province. It was a division of the Hindus and the Muslims. Curzon himself made that clear in

12 *Ibid, op. cit.*
13 *Hindu Patriot*, 1 October 1857.
14 Thomas R. Metcalf, *The Aftermath of the Revolt*, Princeton, 1965, p. 308 (Table).

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his speech at Dacca on 18 February 1904. 'The partition, he said, 'would invest the Mohammedans in Eastern Bengal with a unity they have not enjoyed since the days of the old Mussalman viceroys and kings'.[15] Curzon might well have exclaimed in the words of the Bible 'I came not to send peace, but a sword.'[16] The Indians swallowed the bait, and all that the English had to do was to bring them further and further apart.

The rowdy demonstrations of the Hindus with their deafening shouts of *bande mataram*, the practice of distributing *rakhis* (thread wristlets) to symbolise the continued unity of Bengalis, the *swadeshi* movement stressing the use of Indian goods and the boycott of foreign ones—all these were much more disturbing to the British administrators than the conservative politics of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. Besides they considered 'the subversive radicalism' of Bengali Hindus a dangerous weapon. All this resulted not only in Hindus and Muslims drifting apart, but also in the Muslims and the British coming closer. The post-mutiny position was reversed. Henceforth all out support to the Muslims became one of the ways of dampening the ardour of Indian nationalism.

It can't be denied that the Hindu approach was tactlessy melodramatic. It is too much to say that *bande mataram* was 'a song disliked by the Muslims of Eastern Bengal.'[17] There was nothing displeasing about the song, in fact its martial melody was quite befitting. At the worst it could have been gibberish for any but the Hindus, though one can hardly understand why it provoked the English so much that they beat up the singers in the streets. Anyway the Hindu demonstrators, had they behaved with a little less zeal and a little more commonsense, could have avoided irritating the Muslims by mixing up the swadeshi and boycott movements with a public celebration of Shivaji's festival. A Muslim paper the *Soltan* hinted; 'if they (the Hindus) must celebrate such festivals,

15 *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, ed. R.C. Majumdar, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1969, Vol. XI, p. 24.

16 St Matthew, X. 34.

17 Syed Razi Wasti, *Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement*, Oxford, 1964, p. 28.

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why not find some hero who would not be so obnoxious and unpalatable to the Muslims as Shivaji was.'[18] Had the Hindus refrained from such provocations which, as the *Soltan* remarked, were obnoxious to Muslims, one wonders whether they would even then have supported the Congress and its objectives. Perhaps not; for when Sir Syed on 28 December 1887 openly attacked the Congress, among the points he made, one was that the Hindus and Muslims were 'two different nations' in spite of many things in common. This clearly meant that there could be no hope of the two joining in any identical purpose. It is a strange thought, when only less than half a century ago Muslims had combined with Hindus to make a bid for freedom from the foreign yoke. There could be only one explanation—that the two had again been separated by someone who did not want them ever to unite. And that could only be the British. The sage Tulsidasa says : See the wonderful nature of friendship : when water is mixed with milk it sells at the milk's price. But when sour guile is dropped into it, the two again become separate, and friendship loses its charm.'[19] Thus it was that ultimately the wily English administrators managed to pitch the Hindus and Muslims against each other, and so successful were they that even while leaving, they left an eternal gulf between them. Sir Syed Ahmed's dream of 'two different nations' was made a reality.

Lord Minto's inheritance, which most historians conceive of as difficult, was in a way easy; for the sour deceit in the milk-water of Hindu-Muslim friendship had already been thrown in by his predecessor. The Muslims were almost as eager as the English themselves that the Bengal partition should stay. On 12 January 1906 the Indian Association presented an address to Minto detailing the grievances of the Bengalis. Although the viceroy listened patiently, he made it clear that there would be no going back on the partition. 'The redistribution of Bengal'

18 *Ibid*, p. 30.

19 *Ramacharitmanasa, Balakanḍa*, 57 B *Jalu paya saris bikai dekhahu priti ki riti bhali. Bilag hoi rasa jat kapaṭ khaṭai parat puni.*

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Morley remarked in his budget speech, 'is now a settled fact.'[20] The reasons given by the secretary for state were that restoring the status quo would be a costly affair and that the anti-partition agitation having subsided, it was not wise to rake it up again. The arguments were not really convincing. The agitation had not subsided, even though the viceroy kept reporting time and again that it had. The Muslims were happy about the partition, for they saw in it the germination of their two nation theory. 'The Mohammedans who largely preponderate in Eastern Bengal,' wrote Minto, 'appear to be generally satisfied with what has occurred'.[21] According to the viceroy the agitation was not due to any national feeling in India. The reasons for it were 'loss of a certain amount of business, especially legal business which now migrates from Calcutta to the large cities of Eastern Bengal, and that this feeling had been fanned into a blaze by wire-pullers at home connected with the National Congress'.[22] This was also the view of Sir Bampfylde Fuller lieutenant governor of Bengal who wrote to the viceroy, 'the Mussalmans . . . favour the partition and are losing no opportunity of showing their respect for the new government.'[23]

Henceforth the English government kept on encouraging the Muslims, and the Muslims began to denounce everything that the Congress revolutionaries did. They did not join the protest movements or the symbolic demonstrations for the use of *swadeshi*, even though most of the Bengali weavers who profited by the use of Indian made goods were Muslims. Muslim traders and vendors refused to boycott British goods.

Meanwhile Indian national leaders like Tilak and Gokhale were organising *swadeshi* movements, protest meetings and boycott of foreign goods. At the Barisal *ghats* peaceful

20 Budget Speech 6 June 1907, John Morley, Indian Speeches (1907-9) London, 1909, page 11.

21 Minto to Morley, 20 December 1905, Morley Papers. India Office Library.

22 Syed Razi Wasti, *Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement*, Oxford, 1964, p. 27.

23 Fuller to Minto, 26 November, 1905, Minto Papers.

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processionists were beaten up by the police, and Surendranath Banerjee was arrested. In Serajganj some boys of two local schools went about interfering with trade, and in the process assaulted a European. Fuller got the schools disaffiliated and made arrangements for a new government school to replace them. The government did not approve of Fuller's action and asked him to withdraw his orders. The lieutenant governor replied that he would rather resign than do so. Minto, who was displeased with his officer's performance, readily accepted the resignation on 3 August 1906. Hindus acclaimed the viceroy's action, not so the Muslims. They started an agitation against it. In fact this was just what the British rulers wished for.

'Minto, Morley and Sir Arthur Godley all thought it a good sign. "As long as it does not get out of control it will be useful to us" Minto thought. And Godley wrote to the viceroy "I cannot help being rather pleased at the demonstrations which are being made in his favour. They will be a most useful reminder to people in this country—some of them in high positions—that the Bengali is not everybody in India." '[24]

The Muslim sentiment was gleefully exploited by L. Hare, Fuller's successor as Bengal's lieutenant governor. He took particular interest in the welfare of Muslims, giving them his most careful attention, doing his best to faithfully implement the divide and rule policy of his masters. With his subtle methods he succeeded in further widening the rift between the two communities, much to the viceroy's satisfaction. Congratulating Hare, he wrote: 'The fact that the Mohammedan population has been thoroughly aroused has introduced a factor into the history of the new province which, I trust, will prove most useful.' It was a factor which came to stay, even if the partition didn't.

Meanwhile agitation limped along with varying vicissitudes. Repression followed spurts of violence, the ringleaders

24 Minto to Morley, 22 August 1906, Morley Papers, India Office Library, and Godley to Minto, 20 September 1906, Minto Collection. Quoted in Syed Razi Wasti, *Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement*, *Oxford*, 1964, p. 51.

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languishing in prisons without trial. The device which made this possible was the Regulation III of 1818 which dispensed with charges or trials. In October 1906 Romesh Dutt wrote to Morley: 'Moderate leaders are losing their hold on the people in Bengal. Men are getting disheartened and extremists are having their chance'.[25] It was a fair assessment, even though Minto kept harping on the idea that 'the partition agitation was dying down.'[6] Within a week of Dutt's warning, a bomb was hurled at the carriage of an English district judge. The judge was saved, but two ladies in another carriage behind him were killed. On 6 November 1908 a shot was fired at the lieutenant governor of West Bengal, which luckily missed him. Nine persons were deported under the Preventive Detention Act. The agitation spread to the Punjab and a huge meeting was held at Rawalpindi in which Ajit Singh a pleader asked the people to be ready to die for the motherland, or else go home. Ajit, and Lala Lajpat Rai who was really a moderate, were deported. More repression followed. Sedition proceedings were launched against newspapers. Tilak, the leaders of the Nationalist Party was arrested and convicted by a European jury. The movement continued despite the reports of the lieutenant governor of Bengal that things were getting better. An inspector of police was killed in Calcutta, and an attempt made on the governor's own life. More persons were deported, including Ganesh Damodar, Veer Savarkar and A.K. Dutt. The assassinations, however, continued. A twenty-five year old Punjabi student, Madan Lal Dhingra, murdered Morley's political aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Colonel Sir William H. Curzon-Wyllie. In November 1909 some coconut bombs were thrown at the viceroy's carriage but they failed to explode. Arthur Mason T. Jackson, the retiring collector of Nasik, was shot by a Brahmin lad. There was more repression. This in fact remained the pattern of the national movement in Minto's time. Although the moderates dominated the

25 Stanley A. Wolpert, *Morley and India*, University of California Press, 1967, pp. 105-6.

26 Minto to Godley 3 January 1907. Kilbracken Collection, F. 102/25.

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Congress, they could not keep the extremists from taking the field.

2. The Indian National Congress

The lead in forming the Indian National Congress was taken in 1855 by Allan Octavian Hume a retired Civilian, with the object of providing an adequate channel of communication between the government and the people. Hume considered it 'of paramount importance to find an overt and constitutional channel for discharge of the increasing ferment which had resulted from western ideas and education'.[27] The objects which the Congress set before itself were to provide a common platform for those who desired national progress, and to discuss and decide the steps to be taken during the ensuing year to accomplish this aim. It was hoped that the Congress would be able to determine in due course the question about the possible introduction of the parliamentary form of government in India.

The first Congress met in Bombay in December 1885 and was attended by seventy-two delegates 'mostly lawyers, schoolmasters or newspaper editors' gathered with great effort. Mr W. Bonerjee government standing counsel in Calcutta presided over the deliberations. The delegates generally praised the rule of the British government and hoped for a fuller development of national unity. A demand was made for the expansion of the provincial legislative councils, the constitution of a standing committee of the House of Commons to listen to protests of the majorities recorded by the councils, and the holding of the ICS competitive examinations in India as well as in England. The next Congress, held at Calcutta in 1886, was better attended. About 440 delegates came to it, but only 33 were Muslims. Dadabhai Naoroji, a Parsi of eminence, presided. One of the resolutions drew attention to 'the increasing poverty of vast numbers of the population of India.' The Congress of 1888 was attended by 1,248 delegates. Six of them were Europeans, and one of these, namely George Yule,

27 Sir Verney Lovett, *A History of the Indian Nationalist Movement*, Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1968, p. 34.

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presided. Among other things the participants recommended 'abolition of the distinctions created by the Arms Act, military colleges for the natives of India, and an inquiry into the industrial condition of the country.'[28]

Despite Sir Syed Ahmed's animosity, the attendance of Muslims in the Congress of 1890 increased, and 156 of them came, out of a total number of 702 delegates. The session was remarkable inasmuch as for the first time there was a slight hostility to British rule. The Congress of 1892, too, expressed their resentment on the orders of the government of India on the report of the Public Services Commission. By this time a committee of English radicals had been established in English, and they started a periodical, *India*, to promote Congress propaganda.

The subsequent years of Congress history up to Minto were disturbed ones. The notable features were disassociation by Muslims, greater opposition to British rule, the entry of extremists like Bal Gangadhar Tilak who started his paper the *Kesari*, and the beginning of British reprisals. Tilak was prosecuted for inflammatory articles in the *Kesari*. Rand, the plague commissoner, and his associate were killed by two Brahmins who professed to belong to the league of Chapekars 'the society for the removal of obstacles to the Hindu religion.'

The twenty-first Congress held at Benares in December 1905 under the presidentship of Gokhale, was attended by 756 delegates of which only 17 were Mohammedans. The tone of the debates was critical, but not aggressive, as Sir Lovett says.[29] All that the delegates said was 'India is distracted, discontented despondent, the victim of many misfortunes, political and others.' In fact Gokhale's presidential address was conciliatory to the point of submissiveness. He said :

'The goal of the Congress is that India should be governed in the interests of the Indians themselves, and that, in course of time, a form of government should be attained in this

28 Sir Verney Lovett, *A History of the Indian Nationalist Movement*. Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1968, p. 43

29 Sir Verney Lovett, *A History of the Indian Nationalist Movement*, Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1968, p. 61.

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country similar to what exists in the self-governing colonies of the British Empire. For better, for worse, our destinies are now linked with those of England, and the Congress freely recognises that whatever advance we seek must be within the Empire itself.[30]

During the next five years (1905-10) new concepts like *swadeshi* (indigenous goods) *swaraj* (self-government) and boycott of foreign goods, had arisen. The singing of *bande mataram* became symbolic of the desire for freedom.[31] The principles and the nature of the Congress movement also underwent a change. Criticism and denunciation of English administration replaced the former admiration for it. The Congress began to demand a greater share for Indians in the public services, popular elections, elected legislatures, a free press, equitable taxation, representation of Indians in the executive councils in the states and at the centre, and even direct representation in the British parliament.[32] The nature of the movement also underwent a change. In the beginning the moderates held the field. The main figures among these were Gokhhale and Dadabhai Naoroji. Gradually, however, some of the Congressmen, notably Tilak, Khapate, Bepin Chandra Pal and Lajpat Rai, got disillusioned with the gulf between British promises and performance. They came to be known as extremists because they urged a more virulent way of ventilating their grievances. The extremists were not really terrorists, but once people are incited, incidents such as those already narrated could occur.[33] In fact the extremists wished to force the hands of the British rulers to give Indians *swaraj*. This they wished to accomplish by mass demonstrations, meetings, processions, and propaganda through the press. The main weapons were use of Indian goods and consequent boycott of those foreign made, and the

30 G K. Gokhale, Congress's Aims and Aspirations, December 1905, D.K. Karve and D.V. Ambedkar, *Speeches and Writings of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, London, 1966, Vol. II p. 204.

31 A song composed by Bankim Chandra Chatterji, *bande mataram* means 'Hail, motherland'.

32 M.N. Das, *India Under Morely and Minto*. Allen and Unwin, 1964, p 88.

33 See the previous section—*Curzon's Legacy*.

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inculcation of a sense of patriotism. But boycott began to mean something more for the extremists. In his speech at Calcutta on 2 January 1907 in which Tilak defined the tenets of his new party he said :

'This is boycott and this is what we mean when we say, boycott is a political weapon. We shall not give them assistance to collect revenue and keep peace. We shall not assist them in fighting beyond the frontiers or outside India with Indian blood and money. We shall not assist them in carrying on the administration of justice. We shall have our own courts, and when the time comes we shall not pay taxes.[34]

The ideas conceived by Tilak sounds more like non-cooperation than mere boycott. The main difference between the moderates and the extremists was that while the one hoped the British government would of themselves give more and more liberty to Indians, the other despaired of any such good sense prevailing, and believed such a situation was an impossibility. Expressing this view, Tilak despairingly exclaimed:

'To convert the whole electorate of England to your opinion and then to get indirect pressure to bear upon the members of parliament, they in turn to return a cabinet favourable to India, and the whole parliament, the Liberal party and the cabinet to bring pressure on the bureaucracy to yield—we say this is hopeless.'[35]

The British rulers, the extremists said, could never relent because 'that man must be a fool indeed who would sacrifice his own interest on hearing a philosophical lecture.'[36] The partition of Bengal had been called 'a disagreeable pill' by Morley and he considered that it ought to be gilded to make it palatable.[37] The attitude had long deceived the Indians ever since the Queen's proclamation and even from earlier. The extremists no longer wished to be deceived. 'Benevolence is used to sugar-coat the declarations of self-interest,' Gokhale said,

34 B.G. Tilak, *His Writings and Speeches*, Madras, 1919, p. 65

35 B.G. Tilak, On the Tents of the New Party, 2 January 1907, Tilaks' Speeches and Writings, 1918, pp. 37-50.

36 *Ibid.*

37 Morley to Minto, 3 May 1906.

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'and we were in those days deceived by the apparent benevolent intentions under which rampant self-interest was concealed.'[38] What Tilak and the members of his new party aimed at was to create so much of a furore that the British would find governing India too much of a task. And to some extent they succeeded in their objective. While passing one of his repressive measures against the press in 1910 Morley wrote wearily to Clarke, 'I don't object to it, only to suppose it will touch the root of the many mischiefs around us, is surely an idle dream. A pill for an earthquake: Not much more than that, is it?'[39] Even while Morley acquiesced in repression, he knew it would not work. Agitation was the hydra headed monster, or in Hindu symbolism like Ravana with his ever growing heads. And even so the vicious circle went on. Agitation-repression, agitation-repression, until what the extremists had in mind, happened; but only after half a century of this torturous chain:

> For Freedom's battle once begun,
> Bequeath'd by bleeding Sire to Son,
> Though baffled oft is ever won.[40]

Within the Congress itself, however, all was not well. With Morley patronising Gokhale and the moderates, the extremists, rightly interpreting this as an effort to create a split, became all the more aggressive. Morley's attitude to Gokhale turned from benign hope to disappointment. When the nationalist leader was in England he said 'Gokhale has a politician's head, appreciates executive responsibility and has an eye for the tactics of practical common sense.[41] But soon when the secretary of state found that the extremists were getting out of hand, he vented all his rage on Gokhale, who could hardly be

38 B.G. Tilak, *Speeches, and Writings*, 1918, pp. 37-50.
39 Morley to Clarke, 2 February 1910. Quoted in Stanley A Wolpert, *Morley and India*, California, 1964, p. 127.
40 Byron, *The Giaour* 1: 123.
41 M.N. Das, *India Under Morley and Minto*, Allen and Unwin, 1964, p. 91.

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expected to do anything about it. 'I have often thought during the last twelve months' Morley said 'that Gokhale as a party manager is a baby. A party manager, or for that matter any politician aspiring to be a leader, should never *whine*. Gokhale is always whining, just like the second-rate Irishmen between O'Connell and Parnell'.[42] In December 1907 at Surat the inevitable split in the Congress took place. The moderates continued to be lukewarm to *swaraj* and *swadeshi*. There was dispute about the choice of a president. The name of Dr Rash Behari Ghose was proposed, but when Surendranath Banerjee seconded it, disorder broke out. Banerjee himself narrates the incident as follows:

'Chairs and shoes and slippers were flung at the leaders, the platform was rushed—I remained on the platform with some of my friends forming a guard round me. I was led along with Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and others to the tent behind, and the police cleared the *pandal*. Thus closed a memorable chapter in the history of the Congress.'[43]

Morley visualised the split as 'pointing to a future stage in which Congress will have become an extremist organisation'.[44] The viceroy, however, read in it 'the disappearance of the extremists'. He hailed the event as 'a great triumph for us.'[45] Morely was of course right. He had judged the situation more correctly even though being miles away. But he still had hope because of two things—the first his packet of reforms for which the moderates were all agog, and the second, the mounting Muslim animosity to the Congress. The reforms misfired with the Congress, despite being highly praised by some. But the Muslims saw in them the promise of better things to come. In a letter written to a friend in England, Gokhale summed up the situation as follows:

'So the whole feeling in Bengal is towards extremism. The

42 Morley Papers, Morley to Minto, Vol. II, 31 October 1907.

43 Surendranath Banerjee. *A History in Making, Being Reminiscences of Fifty Years of Public Life*, Calcutta, 1963, p, 219.

44 Morley Papers, Morley to Minto, Vol. II, 27 December 1907.

45 Morley Papers, Minto to Morley, Vol. III, 15 January 1908.

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The moderates in the other provinces see the danger of drifting into the arms of the extremists, and are determined to stand firm. The situation is further complicated by the fierce antagonism between Hindu and Mohammedan. In short the situation is full of anxiety.'

The Muslim Reaction

Curzon had only contempt for the Congress. 'My own belief is' he wrote to Hamilton in 1900, 'that the Congress is tottering to its fall, and one of my greatest ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise.' His ambition remained, of course, unfulfilled, but he certainly gave the Congress a parting kick by partitioning Bengal so as to give half of it a Muslim majority. Minto created a furore by declaring in December 1906 in the course of an address at the Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition at Calcutta: 'I shall at any rate rejoice if my presence should confirm the dissociation of honest *swadeshi* from political aspirations. There is no occasion, there is no justification for confusing the two.'[46] The implication was that *swadeshi* should not be made a slogan, and that *swadeshi* if exploited for political ends was something with which dishonesty was associated. Instead of acting as a brake, the viceroy's observation gave even more impetus to the movement. But what was perhaps more ruinous to t e Congress interest was the gradual weaning away from it of the Muslims.[47]

Ever since Mahmud Ghazni had ransacked the temple of Somnath, the see-saw of Hindu-Muslim relations had been moving up and down. Most of the Afghan and Mughal rulers, last but not the least, Aurangzeb, tried to make the infidels see the glory of Islam. When the British came, the grandeur of Islam was replaced by the glory of Christianity. For the English missionaries and the English rulers the distinction

46 Morley Papers, Morley to Minto, Vol. IV, 14 October 1909. Contents of Gokhale's letter. Quoted by M.N. Das, *India Under Morley and Minto*, Allen and Unwin, 1964, p. 103.

47 Morley Papers, Minto, Address, December 1906.

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was no longer infidel and the faithful, but European and native. They considered the natives to be struggling in the darkness of spiritual ignorance and were eager to bring them into the light of Christian culture and civilisation. Up to the revolt of 1857 the Muslim attitude to the English rulers was one of animosity. The imperial aura of Mughal rule took time to fade. The rebels of the Indian revolt proclaimed Bahadur Shah II as the emperor of India. It was only with his deportation to Rangoon and his death in 1862 that the last of the Mughals passed out of Indian history. Hodson made sure the dynasty ended by killing the emperor's sons in cold blood—'a deed of dreadful note.' But when agitation mounted following the Bengal partition, it was the Muslims who remained loyal. The reason for the reapproachment was not animosity to the Congress, at least not in the beginning. 'Prior to 1906' says one writer 'there had been no political communalism as such. The Congress, although overwhelmingly Hindu in membership from its inception, excluded all socio-religious questions from its annual deliberations. The Muslim League, on the other hand, was started in direct response to the prospect of legislative reform promised by Morley in his budget message of 1906.[48]

It has been made out by some writers that the move to divide the Muslims and the Hindus did not come from the side of the English rulers. They were themselves divided, and the British only tried to find out a way to deal with the situation. Stanley Wolpert says, for example 'The real problem confronting British officials, as they saw it, was not how to divide and rule India, but rather how to rule a divided India.'[49] But initially the Hindus and Muslims were not at all divided. In June 1907 Lord Minto himself reported to Morley:

'I think the caste and religious differences certainly in respect of the two great groups of Mohammedans and Hindus are showing signs of weakening, and that in the next generation there is a great prospect of the disappearance of the separation

48 Stanley A Wolpert, *Morley and India*, California, 1967, pp. 185-6.

49 Stanley A Wolpert, *Morley and India*, University of California Press, 1967, p. 191.

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of castes and religions in deference to the calls of political aims.'[50]

Yet the British government had decided to appease the Muslims, till even Gokhale, who was usually a spokesman for the English, had to say, 'Government must do something to show that they do not look on Mohammedans as their pets, and reject the ideas that all Hindus are disloyal... Hindus all over India are convinced that government are obsessed with this idea.'[51]

The result of the Mohammedan and British concord was a Muslim deputation to the viceroy, which led to the formation of the Muslim League. It began with a feeler thrown by Mohsin-ul-Mulk, who had succeeded Sir Syed as secretary of the Aligarh College, to W.A.J. Archbold its principal. Mohsin-ul-Mulk wrote that the Muslims wished to submit a memorial to the viceroy about their rights, and would he advise whether it would be all right to do so through a deputation ? Archbold passed on the letter to the viceroy and Minto sent a copy to Morley. Morley agreed, and the deputation led by the Aga Khan met the viceroy. The main points urged were :

1. The Muslims should be given adequate representation in the municipalities, district boards and legislative councils, not merely proportionate to their number but also considering their 'political importance, and the value of the contribution which they make to the defence of the empire' as well as 'to the position which they occupied in India a little more than a hundred years ago.'

2. Election should be given preference to nomination, and the Muslims should have the right to send their own representatives through separate electorates.

3. For choosing Mohammedan members, Muslim landowners, lawyers, merchants etc., Muslim members of provincial councils and Muslim fellows of the universities should be invested with electoral powers to be exercised according to a procedure which the government may evolve.

The viceroy thought the address 'moderate and excellent,

50 Morley Papers, Minto to Morley, Vol. VI, 5 June 1907.
51 Morley Papers, Vol. VII, Note from Dunlop Smith, 29 October 1907.

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but very difficult to answer without tumbling into quicksands.'[52] Nevertheless he did tumble, and eagerly exclaimed 'I am entirely with you'. In fact he gave a definite promise : 'The Mohammedan community may rest assured' he said 'that their political rights and interests as a community will be safeguarded by any administrative re-organisation with which I am concerned.' There was a lot of opposition from Hindus for separate electorates, although Gokhale, spokesman for the British, was for it. He agreed it would weaken future political union but thought that it was the only way to remove 'soreness in the mind of the minorities.' The matter, he said, ought to be 'looked at in large way and practical spirit.'[53] Morley took almost the same line in justifying the communal electorates. He had mainly two arguments—expediency and better affinity with the Muslims. T.R. Buchanan, his parliamentary under-secretary, speaking for him, said in the House of Commons :

'If you start from our democratic theories of representative government, of course, all such special representation is an anomaly, but we have to deal with the practical problem which is before us—the best practical solution which is available. And the Mohammedans have a special and overwhelming claim upon us.'[54]

In other words if India was at all fit for democracy it was fit not for English democracy but for the Indian brand of it.

The move by the Muslims was favoured both by the viceroy as well as the secretary of state who saw in it an opportunity of crushing the Bengali agitation. Minto wrote to the British King in December 1906 'The Mohammedan movement has done a great deal of good in making it clear that there are other factors to consider besides mere Bengali interests.'[55] Meanwhile the Aga Khan was busy forming an All-India Muslim League. On 30 December 1906 the first meeting of the League was held at Dacca. 'The Mohammedans' the conference affirmed 'disapproved

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52 Morley Papers, Minto's reply, 1 October 1906.
53 Morley Papers, Gokhale's council statement, Minto to Morley, 31 March 1909.
54 Morley Papers, Buchanan to House of Commons, 1 April, 1909.
55 Minto Papers, Minto to the king 12, December 1906.

Indian Council for Cultural Relations New Delhi Library

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all rabid senseless opposition to the government...The cause of the Mohammedans was the cause of the British, and the sympathies of the government were with the Mohammedans.'[56] About the partition they said that it was sure to prove beneficial to the community which constitutes the majority of the population. The objects set forth were to promote loyalty to the British government, to protect the right of Muslims and to give them a forum for ventilating their grievances, and to 'prevent the rise among Mussalmans of India of any feelings of hostility towards other communities without prejudice to the other objects of the League.'[57] The British response to the formation of the League was highly favourable. In gratitude the lieutenant governor pressed for a government loan to the Nawab of Dacca to save him from financial ruin. Aligarh, which had provided the starting point for the formation of the body, began to get the particular attention of the viceroy.

Between 1906 and 1910 the new All-India Muslim League met every year, except in 1909. It was the beginning of that parting of the ways which finally led to the formation of a separate Pakistan for the Muslims. A writer says 'The League did not receive that sort of Government patronage which the Congress had received at its inception, yet still present-day writers call it a British organised party.'[58] The basis for this comment appears to be an observation of Minto that the government could not agree that the League 'was the only authority to be consulted on Mohammedan matters.' But Minto said at the same time that it was 'a very representative Mohammedan body to which we should naturally refer for an opinion on any question of importance.[59]' Another factor mentioned is that the League thrived on 'voluntary contributions.'[60] How much British patronage the Congress enjoyed is evident by the remarks of Lord Dufferin who had hastily

56 M.N. Das, *India Under Morley and Minto*, Allen and Unwin, 1964 p. 178.

57 *Ibid*, (League Resolutions, *Pioneer*, 2 January 1907.)

58 Syed Razi Wasti, *Lord Minto and the Nationalist Movement*, Oxford, 1964, p. 87.

59 Minto to Hewett, 15 February 1910, Minto Collection, Edinburgh.

60 Wasti, *Lord Minto and the Nationalist Movement*, Oxford, 1964, p. 87.

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acceeded to its formation, Lord Curzon who positively hated it, and Minto who hoped it would break up soon. Of the Congress, Lord Dufferin had said 'They neither represent the aristocratic sections of Indian society, nor are they in special contact or sympathy with the great masses of the population.'[61] Curzon considered it his greatest ambition 'to assist the Congress to a peaceful demise.'[62] Minto observed that he did not know how the Congress collapse would work out, but 'with everything pointing to the disappearance of the extremists...it is a great triumph for us.'[63] On the second point there is a detailed letter of C.W. Bolton, chief secretary to the government of Bengal, setting forth the nature of financial support received by the Congress. The report is based on information furnished by detective superintendent of the Calcutta police.[64] About the funds expected from English agencies the letter says.

'The centre of the movement is Calcutta, but even there funds are not liberally supplied. The British committee in London were promised Rs 8,000 annually from the Calcutta standing committee,...but no payment has been made for 1898 and 1899, notwithstanding several reminders from Mr. A.O. Hume, the general secretary at home. At the Berar conference of 1897 it was agreed that £ 1,000 should be collected for a memorial in recognition of the generous help given by the British people during the famine, and that £ 500 should be raised in Bengal. It appears that not a single rupee has actually been collected in Bengal.'

'For the last three years there has also been no payment of the sum of Rs 500 out of the interest on the national fund which was to be annually given to the Congress fund.'

The report goes on to say that when the annual conferences are held each delegate is expected to pay Rs 10. A few Bengali zamindars are mentioned as regular subscribers. Others who

61 Lord Dufferin's Minute on the Congress, November 1888.
62 Lord Curzon to Lord Hamilton, 18 November 1900.
63 Morley Papers, Minto Morley, Vol. VIII, 15 January 1908.
64 C.W. Bolton's Letter on Congress Support, 18 July 1899, Hamilton Papers, India Office Library, D 510/2, Vol. 14, pp. 227-30.

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contributed occasionally, though liberally, are the late Maharaja of Darbhanga and Maharani Sharnamayi of Kasimbazar.[65]

Another study made by Charles Stuart Bayley ICS, mentions various other Hindu subscribers like the Maharaja of Vizianagram, the Gaikwar of Baroda, and Mr Tata.[66] It is evident therefore that the Congress did not receive any 'British government patronage.' On the contrary it always remained an eyesore to the British.

There was a vast gulf in fact between the ideologies of the Congress and the All-India Muslim League. The Congress wanted *swaraj* or self-rule, the League wanted the establishment of the English Government 'on the firmest possible basis.'[67] The reason for being so eager to be governed by the British, was given by one of the foremost Muslim leaders as follows:

'Now, suppose that the English are not in India and that one of the nations of India has conquered the other, whether the Hindus the Mohammedans, or the Mohammedans the Hindus. At once some other nation of Europe, such as the French, the Germans, the Portugese, or the Russians, will attack India....Everybody knows something or other about these powerful kingdoms of Europe. Everyone will admit that their governments are far worse, nay beyond comparison worse, than the British government. It is therefore, necessary that for the peace of India and for the progress of everything in India the English government should remain for many years—in fact for ever.'[68] In other words, since India's destiny was to remain enslaved for ever, it was better to have a known master than an unknown one.

A Whiff of Reform

In a previous volume we have dealt with the Indian Councils

65 *The Evolution of India and Pakistan*, Select Documents, C.H. Philips and others, Oxford, 1962 pp. 149-50.
66 *Ibid*, pp. 147-9 C.S. Bayley's Note on Congress Support, 18 June 1899.
67 Speech of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan at Meerut, 14 March 1888.
68 Speech of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan at Meerut, 14 March 1888.

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Act 1882.[69] This came as somewhat of a disappointment. It did not give enough powers to the legislative councils, had few elected members, chosen by a roundabout process of election, and even these had little privilege, for they could neither raise questions nor effectively discuss the budget.

The alarming political developments following the partition made Morley turn to reform. His ideal was doubtless 'order plus progress' as he wrote to Minto, but it was not so much progress he aimed at, as appeasement. Both Hindus and Muslims had strongly reacted to partition—the Hindus because they didn't want it, the Muslims because they did. Although Morley was reform minded he did not conceive of his measure as a step towards representative government. While observing that his Indian Councils Bill opened 'a very important chapter in the history of the relations of Great Britain and India,' he made it clear that 'he wanted neither to establish a parliamentary system in India nor introduce reforms that might lead directly or necessarily to the creation of such a system.'[70] There were three sections in India that mattered—the Muslims, the moderates in the Congress, and the extremists. By his reforms he hoped to please at least the first two. The extremists, he knew, were too much out of hand to accept such a half-hearted measure.

It is pointless to debate to whom the credit goes. Lady Minto would of course claim her husband as the originator of the reforms. Other writers think it was Morley. Wolpert says 'If anyone deserves to share credit with Morley for initiating the reform scheme, it is Gokhale rather than Minto, although Gokhale's role was, of course, advisory.'[71] Whoever it was, the reforms themselves were not such a great achievement to call for praise.

69 Author's *A History of Indian Civilisation*, Vol. 3 part 1, Ess Ess Publications, New Delhi, 1981, see chapter on Lord Ripon to Lord Elgin II, Lord Landsdowne.

70 Stanley A. Wolpert, *Morley and India*, University of California., 1967, p. 129.

71 Stanley A. Wolpert, *Morley and India*, University of California, 1967, p. 133.

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Composition of the Legislative Councils

The Indian Councils Act of 1909 enlarged the size of the legislative councils at the centre as well as in the provinces. The central council was to have 68 members out of which 36 would be official and 32 non-official. Even out of the non-official members 5 were to be nominated, which left the elected members as only 27 in a house of 68. These were to be elected on the basis of classes and interests as follows:

Landlords	6
Mohammedans	5
Mohammedan landlords	1
To be elected by the general electorate	13
To represent the two chambers of commerce (Bengal and Bombay)	2
	27

In the same manner the size of the provincial legislative councils was expanded to the following strength:

Madras and Bombay	46 each[72]
United Provinces	47
Bengal	52
East Bengal and Assam	40
Punjab	24
Burma	15
Bihar and Orissa	43
Assam	24

According to the Act there would be non-official majorities in the provincial legislative councils. But as some of the non-officials were to be nominated, the 'majority' was on

72 The figures exclude the head of the government and experts.

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paper only. The nominated non-official members aligned themselves with the official members in actual practice. The elected non-official member being representatives of interests and classes, they too had official affiliations. Thus the official and the nominated non-official members, between them controlled the house.

The number of members of executive councils in Madras and Bombay were raised from two to four. The Act envisaged extension of similar provision for Bengal and for the lieutenant governors provinces. Provision was made for Indians being appointed to executive councils, and Lord Sinha became the first Indian law member on the governor general's executive council.

The Electoral System

The method of election was indirect, highly restricted and discriminatory. Qualifications of voters varied from one area to another. Discrimination was made on the ground of community. A Muslim graduate with five years standing could vote, but for a non-Muslim graduate a longer period was required. Direct election on the British pattern was considered by the secretary of state to be wholly inapplicable to India. 'You cannot give' he said, 'universal suffrage in India, and I do not insist that India should be on the same footing as our self-governing colonies like Canada'. The result of this outlook was that representation was of classes, communities and interests, not of territorial constituencies. This was not a fair arrangement on two counts. Firstly, communal representation did not imply that a member of the community represented could not be elected to the general seats. Thus a Mohammedan had the choice of being returned by the Muslim electorate as well as through the general and the landholder's constituencies. If this happened, and the number of Muslims became more than the number of seats reserved for them, the governor general could increase their number. Secondly, a number of other professional classes like lawyers and so forth, were bunched up together in the general category. There were many other defects. The condition of residence in the case of a Hindu was

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so rigid that a man living in Calcutta could not seek election for any *mufassil* seat. A member of a district board or municipality had to have a minimum of three years's service to be qualified for election. This provision kept away many educated Hindus who would normally have got a chance. Even after election, government reserved the right to reject the appointment of any elected member. Even though the right was exercised in rare cases, it made a mockery of election.

Procedure and Functions

It can't be denied that the Act of 1909 gave more powers to the councils. Members could move resolutions, discuss the budget and ask questions. But there could be no discussion on foreign relations and on matters which were sub judice, and the president could disallow a resolution on the ground that it was opposed to the public interest.

The financial proposals were introduced in the councils in three stages. In the first stage new grants, loans and taxation measures were discussed. In the second stage the members explained the financial implications of heads or groups of head of the departments in their charge. Resolutions could then be moved on these individual subjects which were put to vote. Finally the finance member would present the whole budget giving reasons for the non-acceptance of resolutions which had been dropped. A general discussion on the budget would follow, but no resolution could be moved at this stage.

Evaluation of the Reforms—Did they Fulfil Indian Aspirations

The Act was the British *prasad*,[73] given after a long wait. It kept Indians agog with expectation—particularly the moderates and the Muslims. Gokhale had thought they would bring something worthwhile, and in fact had been their greatest advocate. But even he was disappointed. He hardly wanted

73 Offering made to the deity, and thereafter partaken of by the devotees.

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separate electorates as one writer thinks.[74] As Dr R.C. Majumdar clarifies, Gokhale had suggested that there should initially be a general election on territorial basis, all communities participating. Only if important communities failed thereby to get adequate representation should special elections to be held to make up the deficiency.[75] The reaction of the Congress 'now void of extremists' as Sir Lovett says, was on the whole enthusiastic.[76] Gokhale spoke of their 'generous and fair nature.' But the jubilation was shortlived. At its twenty-fourth session at Lahore in December 1909, the Congress strongly disapproved the creation of separate electorates, the 'unfairly preponderant share of representation given to Muslims' and the 'wide arbitrary and unreasonable disqualifications and restrictions for candidates seeking election to the councils.' Surendranath Banerjee blamed the bureaucracy for wrecking the scheme of reforms. In truth, however, neither Morley nor Minto envisaged reforms in the shape Indians wanted them. The idea was to add a horse to the coach, but still keep the reins in their hands. The members might gabble to their hearts's content, but they could do nothing about the government policies. In fact the Act ensured that only those sat in the councils who would not really like to oppose anything. The elected members were a small fraction of the house, and even these were so thoroughly screened that none but the most loyal could enter the awful precincts of the council chamber. Even if one, aspiring to be member, passed all the tests like financial soundness, good behaviour, the absence of the blot of imprisonment; the governor general could finally get rid of him by declaring that his election would be 'contrary to the public interest'. The council was more a gathering of sycophants than

74 Wasti, *Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement*, Oxford, 1964 Wasti says 'Gokhale recognised the Muslim claim.' In proof he quotes from an address to the Deccan Sabha that he had 'all along been in favour of special electorate for important minorities'.

75 *The History and Culture of the Indian People* (ed.) R.C. Majumdar, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1969, Vol. XI p. 144, fn. 52.

76 Sir Verney Lovett, *A History of the Indian Nationalist Movement*, Frank Cass & Co., 1968, p. 78.

77 *Ibid* p. 79.

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one of critics, extolling every measure that was brought up. The extremists would have nothing to do with the reforms which frightfully fell short of their goal of self-government. In his speech of 2 January 1907 Tilak had said : 'I want to have the key of my house, and not merely one stranger turned out. Self-government is our goal; we want a control over our administrative machinery.' The reforms gave none of these things.

Some of the Englishmen themselves considered the reforms ill-advised and inadequate. Lord Curzon who, despite being unkind to India, knew a lot about it, said in the House of Lords on 23 February 1909 that the changes would hardly affect 'the great mass of the people of India, the people who have no vote and have scarcely a voice'. These people would have no place in the councils, and would still be at the mercy of 'the rapacious money-lender and landlord, the local *vakils* and all the other sharks in human disguise'. True enough the reforms envisaged the councils as a galaxy of aristocrats. Landholders and *taluqdars* with or without titles, gentlemen of means with stiff bows from whom exuded confidence in the British rule; in brief the upper echelons of Indian society, sat in the cushioned chairs. The peasant and the middle-class which formed the bulk of India found no place. Sifted through the multiple sieves of the election machinery, the finished product had no semblance whatever to the ingredients which fashioned it. Commenting on the narrow franchise, indirect elections, separate electorates, official predominance and the monopolisation of all power by the government, the Montagu-Chelmsford Report said about the reforms of 1909 : 'they afforded no answer, and could afford no answer, to the Indian political problems.'[78]

The Minto-Morley reforms, as the Act of 1909 is popularly called, did almost nothing to fulfil Indian aspirations. The moderates in the Congress led by Gokhale often spoke about them as though they were some kind of deliverance for the Indians. But they failed to bring the 'land of milk and honey.' The oppressors became stronger than ever. The farmers, the

78 *Montagu-Chelmsford Report*, para 73.

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petty traders and artisans, who formed the bulk of the people, got no relief.

Exactly at the time the reforms came, a drastic change was overtaking the viewpoint of the Indians. They were no longer in a frame of mind to be satisfied by small concessions. Education had given a new intensity to political consciousness. Having thrown off the gag, the press was fearlessly voicing its views on significant happenings. The international situation seemed to say to the activitist, 'go ahead'. As one writer puts it :

'Those who watched the triumphs of Japan, the revolutionary rumblings of Russia, the rise of the Sinn Fein movement in Ireland, the Egyptian struggle for freedom, the Young Turk revolt, the adoption of a constitution in Persia, the introduction of representative institutions in the Philippines, and the grant of responsible government in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, could not but be filled with new-born aspirations for their country and prompted to more energetic action.'[79]

Obviously the half-hearted and over-cautious reforms could hardly be expected to register with people, whose hopes had soared high. By the time the reforms came, the split in the Congress session of 1907 had already taken place. Tilak had raised his slogan 'Militancy—not Mendicancy'.[80] Lajpat Rai perhaps expressed the new ambition of the moderates turned extremists, better than anyone else. 'In our utterances' he said, 'in our agitations and in our fight and struggle for liberty, we ought to be more manly than we have been heretofore.'[81] When the gift of reforms, all wrapped up in attractive cellophane was presented, there were exclamations of pleasure and gratefulness. Rash Behari Ghose said it was 'a great step forward in the grant of representative government for which the Congress had been crying for years.'[82] But when the

79 *Essays in Modern Indian History* (ed.) B.R. Nanda, (S.R. Mehrotra, *The Early Indian National Congress*, 1885-1918 : *Ideals, Objectives and Organisation*), Oxford, 1980, p. 56.

80 D.V. Tahmankar, *Lokamanya Tilak*, London, 1956, p. 112.

81 *Studies in Modern Indian History*, 1972 (Bimal Prasad, *Congress Split at Surat*), p. 152.

82 R.B. Ghose, Presidential Address, Madras, 1908.

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packet was opened it didn't appear at all so good. Morley, whose conscience had been worrying him, guessed as much. 'How rapidly gusts and squalls get up' he wrote, 'when people have time to worry about details'.[83]

The Muslims were happy with the proposed reforms, which is not surprising seeing that they were given their final shape largely to accommodate them. Congressmen veered from applause to disappointment. With the Muslims the process was reversed. In the beginning the scheme baffled them. 'The assembled Mohammedans had no clear ideas about the relative merits of communal or mixed electorates' says Dr Das, 'and they dispersed in confusion without any decision.'[84] Muslims remained divided about their reaction, so much so that they exhausted Morley's patience. 'Whatever happens' he wrote to Minto 'I am quite sure that it was high time to put our foot definitely down, and to let them know that the process of haggling has gone on long enough, come what come may.'[85] If the Muslims too did not accept the reforms, all the efforts to fashion them for their benefit would be wasted. That was an outcome to be avoided by every means possible. If there was a Muslim split, remarked the secretary of state, it would 'in a way take some of the gilt off our Reform gingerbread.' So last minute changes were hurriedly made to prevent such a happening. The British government was rewarded for their labours by the Aga Khan's unqualified approval. The regulations, he said 'fulfil the pledges made to the Muslms and are in advance of their earlier proposals.'[86] Expressing British solidarity with the Muslims of India *The Times* wrote 'No feature of this scheme will, we believe, give greater satisfaction in this country (i.e. England) than the safeguards which it appears to

83 Morley to Fleetwood Wilson, 13 January 1909 (Fleetwood Wilson Papers).

84 M.N. Das, *India under Morley and Minto*, Allen and Unwin, 1964, p. 264.

85 Morley Papers, Morley to Minto, Vol. IV, August 26, 1909.

86 Aga Khan's telegram to *The Times*, Minto Papers, News, Vol. IV, *The Empire* 16 November 1905.

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provide for the adequate representation of Mohammedan interests.'[87]

One might well sum up the achievement of the reforms in the words of an English proverb: the mountains have brought forth a mouse. Of the session of the central legislative council held at Calcutta, Hardinge, Minto's successor wrote to Morley 'It proceeded extremely well, and there seems to be a distinctly good feeling among all the members of the council. I have given them the fullest opportunities for talking and blowing off steam.'[88] That in a way gives succinctly all that the councils were meant to do—talking and blowing off steam.

The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907

The main events of Lord Minto's reign have been narrated. As Dr Das says the three main features of the era were revolution, repression and reform.[89] Another significant event which might be mentioned briefly was the signing of the Anglo-Russian Convention with Russia which emanated from the growing menace from Germany. It was agreed that both the powers would respect the integrity of Afghanistan. The British promised to abandon all aggressive designs on the Amir while Russia agreed to keep hands off Afghanistan by refraining from sending any agent, and having all relations with it only through the government of India.

Spheres of influence were mutually agreed in respect of Persia. While neither Russia nor England was to meddle with central Persia, the south was to be under British influence and the north under the Russian. No attempts for achieving any conquests were to be made.

Dealings with Tibet were to be through China alone. Both

87 Minto Correspondence, Vol. II, no. 168, Minto to Moberly Bell, 27 November 1909.

88 Hardinge to Morley, 25 March 1911, Morley Papers, 26.

89 M.N. Das, *India Under Morley and Minto*, Allen and Unwin, 1964, p. 7 (Introduction).

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England and Russia agreed to respect Tibet's territorial integrity.

The Opium Trade

The British East India Company had been engaged in the opium trade with China from the earliest times. China wanted a stoppage of the export of opium because of its effect on her people. But it brought the British government an annual revenue of eight to ten crore of rupees which was too big an income to forego. In Lord Elgin's time (1894-99) a commission was appointed to go into the question. It was found that the abandonment of the trade would result in a loss of revenue which it would be impossible to make up from other sources. In Minto's time it was agreed that the extent of export would be gradually reduced, and after some time it would cease.

Minto and Morley, An Estimate

No two governors general and secretaries of state have ever been so closely associated as Minto and Morley: and this is largely because of the controversial reforms. Yet one could hardly think of any two men so widely apart in ideas. Minto was easy-going and inclined to leave most things to his subordinate officers. Many of his failures were due this, for the bureaucrats on whom he relied misled him. Defining his idea of good administration, Minto once wrote to Morley that while 'questions of policy should be dealt with by the Supreme Authority, it should feel safe in leaving details to be dealt with by its trusted officers.'[90] Over-centralisation, as with Curzon, was certainly not desirable, for it took away all the initiative from senior administrators. But Minto's wholesale delegation of authority was equally bad. Besides, once he made an officer responsible for some work, he never bothered to consult him or to find out for himself how things were going. Sir G. Clarke wrote to Morley 'The real defect (in the government of India

90 Morley Papers, Vol. VIII, Minto to Morley, 9 January 1908.

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machinery) in which I see danger, is the utter lack of co-ordination.'[91]

Minto was particularly fond of horse-riding and hunting. He had fought for the Turks against Russia and under Lord Roberts in the second Anglo-Afghan war, and had served as governor general of Canada (1899-1904) before coming to India. When he became viceroy of India his friends wondered 'how a man who has never done a real day's work in his life, could shoulder such an arduous responsibilty. Lord Ampthill commented on Minto's appointment:

'We have had elderly men as viceroy, but they were men of established reputation and conspicuous brilliancy, we have also had younger men but they were men who were capable of sufficient work to make up for the lack of brilliancy. We have never yet had an elderly man who was neither brilliant nor hardworking.'[92]

Minto was also a diehard imperialist. He wrote to Morley 'The Raj will not disappear in India so long as the British race remains what it is, because we shall fight for the Raj as hard as we have ever fought...and we shall win as we have always won.'[93] Moreover he disliked any criticism of his acts and policies, so much so that Morley had to write to him 'You strongly deprecate public criticism and parliamentary discussion. I don't know if like King Canute and his courtiers at the seaside you have people who assure you that you can keep back the ocean. Discussion may be undesirable as you please, but then neither you nor anyone else can prevent it.'[94]

Morley was, on the contrary, a conscientious and hard-working administrator.[95] Of his job as secretary for state he said it was 'a heavy load for a virtuous man of conscience'. He worked so hard that 'the day vanishes almost before it had dawned' and he did not even get up for lunch, usually munching 'a sandwich

91 Morley Papers, 42, Sir G. Clarke to Morley, 26 May 1909.
92 Kilbracken Collection, India Office, Ampthill to Godley, 17 October 1907.
93 Morley Papers, Vol. III, Minto to Morley, 27 May 1908.
94 Morley Papers, Vol. V, Morley to Minto, 28 July 1910.
95 Morley to Frederic Harrison, 25 August 1906, Fredric Harrison Collection.

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at my table here.[96] He was an author of repute, having written several books, and a regular contributor to the *Fortnightly*, a prestigious English journal, besides being an excellent speaker and an astute politician. He was of liberal views, and in Indian affairs sought the co-operation of moderate nationalist leaders like Gokhale, Surendranath Banerjee, and R.C. Dutt. In one of his despatches he wrote 'From the 20th January (1906) to the last day of my being at the India office, I shall be an Indian and nothing else.[97]

Despite his liberal views, however, if one judges Morley for his acts rather than for his thoughts, he does not really stand out as one who did much for India (and that, of course, holds true for Minto too). There was always a wide gulf between his utterances and his decisions; so wide in fact that he often leaves the impression that he conceived his lofty ideas to satisfy his conscience, and translated them into action for the preservation of the empire. He befriended Gokhale so long as he thought him useful, but as soon as he found the Indian leader was unable to pacify the extremists in the Congress, he abandoned him. All that Gokhale wanted was there should be no repression. Being more in touch with the Indian people than either the viceroy of the secretary of state, he realised that the harsh measures would work to increase the influence of extremists. But even with all his liberalism, Morley did not appreciate the leader's stand. Since he could not deliver what the British government wanted, he was instantly condemned. 'Is Gokhale extremely simple or extremely crooked ?' he asked Herbert Risley in anger. Minto, of course eagerly expressed his agreement 'I am thoroughly disappointed in Gokhale' he wrote. 'The part he has played of late has disgusted me.'[98]

Despite not agreeing with the steps taken by the viceroy for repression—the harsh measures against the press, deportation, incarceration without trial, ban on meetings and processions, and so forth—Morley did nothing to stop them, beyond getting the release of some leaders whom the viceroy wished to

96 Morley to Lord Minto, 8 March 1906, Morley Papers Vol I.
97 Morley Papers, Morley to Minto, Vol. 1, 11 January 1906.
98 Morley Papers, Vol. VI, Minto to Morley, 7 August 1907.

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detain for longer periods. He always wrote pointing out the injustice of the measures, but it appeared the viceroy was guiding him rather than he the viceroy, in what was finally done. As Wolpert says about the repressive measures 'Morley closed his eyes to cherished principles of liberty and justice, as whose champion he had won worldwide fame and adulation.[99] Right in the beginning Gokhale had, in his presidential address to the Congress (1905), posed the question 'Will Mr Morley the reverent student of Burke, the disciple of Mill, the friend and biographer of Gladstone, courageously apply their principles and his own to the government of this country or will he too succumb to the influences of the India office around him, and thus cast a cruel blight on hopes, which his own writings have done so much to foster?' [100] Gokhale might have wished for the moon. The bee gathers honey but it does not thereby lose its sting. England (and that meant the British empire too), was obviously first, for an Englishman, however liberal, and India was afterwards. When Morley's eyes lingered round Whitehall he was full of noble thoughts. But they vanished as soon as he fixed them on the Indian office files. And he was certainly like one of those whom Lord Buddha, had in mind when he said : As ' a beautiful flower, full of colour but without scent, are the well-spoken but fruitless words of him who does not act as he professes to.'[101]

The Minto-Morley reforms have become so much linked with the viceroy-cum-secretary of state, that they seem to emanate from them much like a web from the spider. They were a web all right, but they came neither from Minto nor from Morley. Rather they came from the puerile differences of the Indians themselves. Pretending to unite the Hindus and the Muslims, they divided them more than ever. In a way it was not reform at all. It was only old wine in new bottles. The council members were elected and yet not elected, they could come to

99 Stanley A. Wolpert, *Morley and India*, California, 1967, p. 233.

100 *The Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, Madras, 1920, p. 708. Quoted in Stanley A Wolpert, *Morley and India*, California, 1967, p. 99.

101 *Dhammapada*, trans. Dr Radhakrishnan

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decisions which did not decide anything. The speakers would rattle off their parts as though on a Shakesperean stage, sans audience. What Hardinge gleefully reported afterwards, Morley and Minto realised all along : 'They (members of the council) knew perfectly well that their resolutions would not and could not be accepted, but it is a great safety valve for them to be able to air their views.' In accepting separate electorates under pressure from the Muslims, despite his not being in their favour, Morley showed weakness. He made a grievous mistake in misreading the Indian reaction to the partition and in persisting in taking it as a settled fact. In not sponsoring any economic measures for the welfare of the general people—'the 300 million subjects whose destinies he guided'—he revealed his indifference. And in yielding to Minto against the dictates of his conscience, he proved his hypocricy. In fact there was no Morley v. Minto as most biographers bring out, there was only Messrs Morley and Minto. This is evident from the closing words of Morley's *Recollections* :

> 'As to any idle claim for priority and originality I am well content for my part to leave it where it was put by *The Times* after Lord Minto's death in 1914 : "viceroy and secretary of state both seem to have come simultaneously to very much the same conclusions, and both worked in a spirit of cordial co-operation to carry out their joint ideas." ' [102]

And that was that. It might be called a confession as much as a recollection—Minto and Morley, the two wheels of the same chariot.

102 Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II. P. 340.

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2

From Repression to Freedom : Lord Hardinge to Lord Mountbatten

'The European Association desires to state, definitely and deliberately, its opinion that a grant of anything approaching self-government for India at the present time would be utterly disastrous to the real interests of the country and a grave injustice to her people.'

Parliamentary Papers Great Britain

We have reached a point in Indian history when the political awakening and reforms assume an importance which overshadows the importance of the rulers. It would therefore be more rational to narrate these events in their continuity after dwelling briefly on the governors general in whose time they occurred.

Lord Hardinge (1910-16)

Lord Minto was succeeded by Lord Hardinge who took over on 23 November 1910. He had been on diplomatic missions to Turkey, France, Persia, and Russia, and was under secretary in the ministry of foreign affairs before taking over as viceroy of India. Hardinge came at a difficult time. Bengal was seething with discontent because of Minto's refusal to go back on the partition. Large scale repression had incensed people all the more against British rule. The much awaited

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reforms had failed to evoke any enthusiasm and fell far short of Indian aspirations. The moderates in the Congress were losing ground and the extremists were itching for action. Then there was the impending royal durbar in which the British king and queen were to come to India for the first time—an event so unique that it was never to be repeated. To add to Hardinge's troubles there was the war of 1914 in which India played a major role, and to top it all there was an attempt on his life which seriously injured him.

1. *Annulment of the Partition*

Immediately on arrival at Bombay, even before he had taken over, Hardinge announced the royal visit. He also expressed his anxiety on the large number of prosecutions for sedition that had been instituted by the lieutenant governor of Bengal, Sir Edward Baker, and which were pending without a decision for years. He ordered that in those cases where the evidence was insufficient the prosecutions were to be withdrawn and no fresh ones were to be initiated. Lord Crewe, who had succeeded Morley as secretary of state for India, expressed the desire that the partition of Bengal might be annulled.

What was guiding these pious thoughts was not the desire to give any relief to the people of India, or to bring self-government nearer. A lot of Indian blood was to be shed, and many promising lives snuffed out, before that came. In fact Hardinge and his government initially opposed the suggestion of Bengal reunification. 'Fireworks or any political concessions designed to produce an effect' they reasoned, were the last thing India needed after five years of 'something very like a revolution on a small scale'.[1] The main reason was the forthcoming royal durbar which was making the viceroy and the secretary of state uneasy. As Prince of Wales, King George V had visited India towards the end of Curzon's reign and had conveyed his displeasure at the lack of human sympathy and the stiffness and superiority of the English

1 Hardinge to Crewe, 22 February 1911. Quoted in J.H. Broomfield, *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society*, University of California, 1968, p. 40.

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officials. The state of affairs now, was no better, and Crewe and Hardinge were eager to do something which would ensure that the royal couple gathered a good impression. Hardinge said about the prosecutions 'As soon as I realised the true situation I sent for the lieutenant governor and told him how much I disliked all these unsatisfactory prosecutions *just at a moment when I was most anxious for a policy of conciliation in view of the impending visit of the king and queen to India within a year's time...*'.[2] The idea of rectifying the partition had the same object. Crewe noted that 'His Majesty was 'strongly in favour' of such a step in principle. These, and other changes, were to be announced at the durbar because 'there was a feeling of expectancy that something would be done at the durbar to remove this injustice (of the partition)'. Such an announcement by the British monarch would make the people favourable to him, and the durbar would be a grand success. It is a hypothetical question whether if there had been no durbar, would the announcement even then come. Perhaps it would, but it might have been much later.

Another significant step taken in Hardinge's time was the shifting of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi. Lord Lawrence had tried to accomplish this but he had been thwarted by his council. The move was really overdue. The Mughals had not without reason chosen Delhi for their capital. It was decidedly a central place with good communications, and intimately connected with India's ancient culture. These two announcements were made at the durbar after being kept a closely guarded secret, the idea perhaps being that the suddenness of the declaration would have a greater impact. The status quo was not however restored. The territories constituting the two Bengals were redistributed as follows :

(1) Bihar, Chota Nagpur and Orissa were constituted into a province under a lieutenant governor-in-council.
(2) Assam reverted to a chief commissionership.

2 *The History and Culture of the Indian People* (ed.) R.C. Majumdar, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1969, Vol. XI, p. 161.

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(3) The rest constituted the province of Bengal under a governor-in-council.[3]

The reason for constituting the separate province of Bihar and Orissa was that the Hindi-speaking people included in the erstwhile Bengal had been raising the cry of Bihar for Biharis. The new capital along with the area encircling it was formed into the new province of Delhi under a chief commissioner.

The annulment of the Bengal partition was welcomed by all shades of people except the Muslims. Many of the younger Mohammedans were convinced that they had been betrayed, and they determined no longer to be loyal to the British rule. A number of associations of Muslims, as for example the Central National Mohammedan Association, were for active opposition. It was only the counsel of the Nawab of Dacca which checked them. The Nawab was upset over the reunion of Bengal as much as his followers, but he visualised greater gains for the Muslims by maintaining their loyalty than by annoying the English masters by opposition. The European non-officials were greatly incensed at the reunification of Bengal and the transfer of the capital of Delhi. They ascribed the move to Indian pressure, and were particularly resentful of the whole thing being kept a secret to purposely prevent them 'from exercising their normal influence on the decision.'[4] The *Statesman* described the measure as a violation of India's constitution (it didn't think the same when the partition was made !) 'In the interests of commerce' it wrote 'it is essential that the English public should know that India is not wholly subject to the caprices of a one-eyed bureaucracy, that public opinion here insists on being consulted, and that the recent irregular and irresponsible proceedings have been vigorously challenged.'[5] It must be said to the credit of King George V that even in two flying visits to India he understood Indian opinion better than those of his English subjects who had always been living there, and his public servants who ought to have had much greater insight of what the Indian people felt.

3 *Ibid*, p. 166.
4 Lord Hardinge, *My Indian Years* 1910-1916, London, 1948, pp. 38-50.
5 *Statesman*, 2 February 1912.

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2. *The Durbar at Delhi*

The Delhi durbar that was held on 12 December 1911, was a memorable event outstripping the grandeur of the old Mughal durbars. Two hundred ruling chiefs of India and the heads of all the provincial governments assembled to bow before the imperial throne. The governor general made certain announcements on behalf of the king. A grant of fifty lakh for promoting popular education was made.[6] All persons employed in the civil and military establishments drawing Rs 50 or less per month were given half a month's pay. Indian soldiers and officers in the fighting forces were made eligible for the Victoria Cross award for gallantry. The practice of native chiefs paying *nazrana* upon succession to their states was to be discontinued. Certain classes of prisoners were released. These announcements were followed by the two major ones, viz. the reunification of Bengal and the transfer of the capital. Thereafter the king laid the foundation stone, of the new capital. A tiger shoot in Nepal and fetes and festivities at Calcutta rounded off the royal visit.

3. *Attempt on Hardinge's Life*

Soon after the signally successful durbar there was an attempt on the viceroy's life when he was heading a procession from the railway station to the new capital. While the procession was passing through Chandni Chowk a bomb was hurled at the elephant on which Hardinge was seated. Although Lady Hardinge escaped, the vicerory was seriously wounded. Even then he maintained his composure, and on regaining consciousness gave orders that the programme at Delhi should proceed as planned and that his speech should be read out by the senior member of his council. Later he announced that his policy 'would not deviate a hair's breadth' because of the attempt on his life. The event infuriated the British and there were demands for reprisals. The *Commerce* wrote 'Government must recognise where its foolish policy of concessions was

6 This was to be supplemented by further grants in the furture.

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leading.'[7] In the Bengal legislative council, Norman McLeod, the spokesman of the European non-officials angrily said:

> 'As long as this attitude of mind exists, as long as the Indian populace display apathy, how can any one expect a reasonable man to admit the possibility of giving an equal voice to such people in the administration of this country—people who so little understand what their duties and responsibilities are as loyal citizens.'

It is true the outrageous assassination attempt deserved universal condemnation. In fact McLeod's tirade was directed against Surendranath Banerjee of the council, who was doing just that. He was moving a resolution expressing the council's horror at the dastardly act. The European member's outburst against the Indian people was thus off the context and nothing more than the suppressed hatred he had againt them. The assassination attempt was neither the first in history, nor yet the last. But just because an American president was assassinated by a countryman of his, one does not condemn the entire American people.

4 *The Impact of the Great War*

Although the first world war was fought in Europe and Mesopotamia, a large number of Indians went to join the allied troops and large sums of money were spent on it from Indian revenues. So it had a tremendous impact on India. It is commonly believed that the war evoked a lot of enthusiasm among Indians. Percival Spear says 'There followed such a scene of enthusiasm as should have warmed the heart of any government. When the legislature met on 4 November 1914, non-official members vied with each other in expressions of loyalty and themselves suggested that India should bear a share of the cost of operation in Europe'.[8] This outburst, he concludes 'was an index both of the prestige of the government

7 *Commerce*, 1 January 1913.
8 Percival Spear, *India*, The University of Michigan Press, 1961, p. 338.

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and the esteem in which it was held at the time.'[9] The enthusiasm was certainly there, but it was not the kind which attends any patriotic zeal. It was more affected than genuine, and indeed it was because of this that the British rulers found it so spectacular. Inner feelings seldom need loud demonstration. The high sounding resolutions, the pious promises and loud protestations of loyalty, and the eloquent speeches at public meetings were all 'words, words, words'. Nor do they appear to be a kind of bargaining for freedom, as is usually thought. The simple fact was that the Indians had no choice. They were never asked whether they would like to fight or not 'When Britain declared war against Germany on 4 August 1914,' as Wolpert says 'India was immediately notified by Lord Hardinge that she, too, was at war.'[10] The Indian soldier might well have exclaimed 'I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter'. And the slaughter was terrible. Some seven thousand Indian troops were dead, missing in action or seriously wounded along the western front. Twelve thousand were massacred at Kut in the mismanaged Mesopotamia campaign, thousands dying 'for want of medicine and mosquito nets as much as for lack of food, shoes and bullets'.[11] During the first six months of the war 80,000 British officers and troops and 210,000 Indian officers and men were sent from India, overseas, apart from 70 million rounds of small-arm ammunition, 60,000 rifles, more than 500 guns of the latest pattern and other war material.[12] The contribution in terms of money too was stupendous. Apart from the expenditure on the troops there was a gift of one hundred million pounds, an amount which exceeded the annual revenue of the government of India and raised her national debt by 30 per cent. Apart from vehicles, steamers, barges, locomotives and so forth, the total expenditure of the government of India up to 31 March 1918 was was about £ 127,800,000, and in addition contributions from

9 *Ibid.*
10 Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India*, Oxford, 1977, p. 289.
11 *Ibid*, p. 292.
12 These and other figures are as quoted in Bhavan's *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, ed. R.C. Majumdar, Vol. XI, 1969 pp. 174.

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the princes and the people £ 2,100,000.[13] The figures speak for themselves, despite Lloyd George's comment that India did 'not spend an extra pice on the war.' [14]

The so called voluntary war contribution of India was more of an exaction. The amount of money to be raised and the number of men drafted was fixed for each district, and woe betide any officer who did not fulfil his target. Coldstream, sessions judge of Muzaffargarh censured the methods followed 'to raise the war loan and to find recruits'. In these circumtances Indians quite naturally hoped that in return for their standing by their rulers in a time of dire need, they would get what they had so long been clamouring for. As Gandhi told the viceroy, 'he and others had decided to help the British empire in times of need only in the expectation that India would be a self-governing unit of it all the more speedily.'[15]

A serious outcome of the war was the ruin of Indian economy due to the sudden cessation of its German-Austria-Hungary trade. The value of this overseas trade on the eve of the war was some twenty-four million pounds. The collapse of the export market caused a steep depression in the major commercial crop prices, particularly short-staple cotton, jute and oil seeds. On the contrary, prices of manufactured goods shot up. The greater quantity of wheat grown in the Punjab went to England to feed the troops, and food hoardings and shortages occurred throughout the period of the war.

5. *More Repression*

The attempt on Hardinge's life, coming in the wake of the durbar had shown that the movement of the extremists had not died down. Even after it Hardinge had observed, that 'he would have no more trouble from the people of India who would give him the most loyal support.' He was right about Bengal where the annulment of the partion had given a brief period

13 *Ibid.*
14 *Ibid op. cit.*, p. 175 Lloyd George's *War Memoirs*, 1933.
15 *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, ed. R.C. Majumdar, Bhavan, 1969, Vol. XI, p. 186.

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of satisfaction. But he was entirely mistaken about there being no more trouble. In fact the trouble had only begun. In the Punjab a wave of violent acts of terrorism marked the *Komagata Maru* tragedy which occurred early in the war. The *Komagata Maru* was a Japanese steamship chartered to carry 400 Sikhs from Shaghai to Vancouver before the war began. The Vancouver authorities did not permit the Indians to disembark. Several Canadian ports were tried with the same result. Ultimately after a long and torturous voyage on the seas they were brought back to Budge Budge (near Calcutta) on 27 September 1914. The Sikhs marched to Calcutta to complain but they were stopped by a force of soldiers and policemen who opened fire on them, killing 16 and leaving 144 'unaccounted for' (which meant killing and whisking away their bodies). 100 were arrested, put in irons and taken to Calcutta, The incident led to the formation of a revolutionary group in the United States under the leadership of Har Dayal.

Another act of the British rulers just before the war, was the framing of repressive measures to crush the Indian revolutionaries. The Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act made conspiracy a heinous offence, punishable even by death. The Defence of India Act was even more drastic. Patterned on the British Defence of the Realm Act (DORA), it could rope in a wider category of people, and of course the revolutionaries, for whom it was primarily intended. This Act created special tribunals, not bound by the ordinary laws. The tribunals could try any person summarily and inflict on him the extreme punishments of death, transportation and imprisonment up to ten years. There was no appeal, except a clemency petition to the viceroy. The tribunals set about their task with dedicated zeal, convicting on the flimsiest evidence and on the basis of confessions extorted by torture. Out of 176 persons tried by these tribunals 136 were convicted, most of them getting the punishment of death or transportation. The rules framed under the Defence of India Act gave powers of internment, detention without trial, and restriction of the movements of any person. Full use was made of these rules to confine and torture the revolutionaries, sometimes those who were innocuous—people like professors and lawyers. Two of them, Professor

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Manindranath Seth and Professor Jyotishchandra Ghosh, were driven to madness and died cruel deaths. The inhuman atrocities to which the internees were subjected were terrible. The renowned English philosopher Bertrand Russell wrote 'Few people in England realise that misdeeds quite as serious (as those of the Nazis in Germany) are being perpetrated by the British in India.'[16] Such a policy of repression could only result in further agitation. The disillusionment, misery and economic exploitation caused by the war added to the discontent. The outward lip sympathy of a certain section of Congressmen deceived the English administrators, and they delayed bringing out those reforms which they vociferously promised. Meanwhile new concepts were taking birth among the nationalists and new leaders were springing up who would give a novel bent to the movement for *swaraj* and infuse in it fresh life. For the sake of continuity these trends will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

Appraisement

Lord Hardinge was on the whole a popular viceroy. Even though a murderous attempt was made on him which injured him seriously, he did not give it any importance out of due proportion, as indeed many of his officers like Sir M. O'Dwyer did. Of the twenty-four persons condemned to death on that account he commuted the sentences of eighteen. He used his influence to get discriminatory laws passed by the government of South Africa withdrawn when Gandhi launched his *satyagraha* movement to protest against ill-treatment to Indians. But he failed to realise the tenor and the spirit of the Indian nationalists, giving full credence to Gokhale's utterances, even when he had ceased to have any influence in Indian politics. He was a well intentioned viceroy who, however, could see little beyond the present.

16 *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, (ed.) R.C. Majumdar, Bhavan, 1969, Vol. XI, p. 195, *op. cit.*

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Lord Chelmsford (1916-21)

The Reforms of 1919

Lord Chelmsford took over as viceroy while the first world war was yet going on. He is known chiefly for the reforms of 1919 which bear his name, and which introduced dyarchy in the provinces.[17]

The Black Acts and Non-cooperation

In the policy of repression, the viceroy was in the forefront. He appointed the Rowlatt Committee to suggest measures to deal with 'seditious conspiracy'. On the basis of the Committee's recommendation the so-called 'Black Acts' were passed in March 1919. The Acts gave powers to special tribunals to try political offenders without a jury and to deport prisoners. Wide and unrestricted powers were given to the police, and crippling restrictions placed on the press. Indian nationalist leaders strongly protested against these Acts and Mahatma Gandhi launched the *satyagraha* movement against them. One such meeting led to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919 in which General Dyer ordered Gurkha and Baluchi troops to fire 1,650 rounds of live ammunition at point blank range on some ten thousand men, women and children, mostly peasants, who had gathered in a grove to celebrate the Hindu festival of Baisakhi. Sir Michael O'Dwyer approved of what the general had done and declared martial law throughout the Punjab. As the news spread, a wave of horror coursed through the Indians. Dyer was relieved of his command on the secretary of state's insistence, but in England he got a hero's reception and was presented with a costly jewelled sword inscribed 'Saviour of the Punjab.'

Atrocities continued in the Punjab. 'In defence of the realm' British officers flogged Indians, made them crawl and undergo all kinds of unthinkable indignities. Rabindranath Tagore

17 The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. These have been considered in detail in the next chapter.

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surrendered the knighthood which had been conferred on him after he had won the Noble Prize for literature in 1913. Millions of others, estranged because of the atrocities, joined the popular movement to get rid of the British yoke. Only a few days after the announcement of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, Motilal Nehru, presiding over the Amritsar Congress in December 1919, said 'if the ordinary rights of human beings are denied to us, then all talk of reform is a mockery'.

The Muslims, too, were dissatisfied by the rough treatment given by the allied powers to Turkey in the war, in spite of an assurance to the contrary. The Turkish empire was dismembered and the caliph was asked to shift his capital to Constantinople. Mahatma Gandhi won a mass Muslim following by supporting the cause of the Ottoman caliph (*khalifah*). Besides he made the Congress movement broadbased by seeking the support of peasants and urban labourers. The first nationwide non-cooperation campaign was launched by Gandhi on 1 August 1920, the day Tilak died. Non-cooperation meant surrender of titles and honorary offices, shunning official functions, gradually withdrawing children from government schools and colleges, refusing service in Mesopotamia, giving up foreign cloth, and boycott of British courts and of the elections to the reformed legislatures. The movement was continuing when Chelmsford was recalled to make way for Lord Reading, his successor.

The Third Afghan War

In the foreign sphere a notable event was the third Afghan war of 1919. After the death of Abdur Rahman in 1901 his son Habibullah became king of Afghanistan. Curzon had maintained a dictatorial attitude which did not encourage the Amir to visit India. Minto's attitude was more cordial, and this made Habibullah come to India in 1907. He was given a grand reception which cemented the relations between the two countries again. Soon, however, European nations, notably Russia and Germany, began to take an interest in Afghanistan. Russia feared that the Afghans might cross the Oxus and link up with the disgruntled Muslims of Turkestan. Germany

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secured construction rights for a railway from Aleppo to Baghdad and Basra. She was trying to detach Russia from her alliance with France and Britain. Ultimately the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907 defined the respective spheres of influence of the two countries in the Tibet-Afghanistan-Persia block. This helped the allies against Germany in the war of 1914.

Immediately after the outbreak of the first world war, Habibullah held a durbar (24 August 1914) in which he announced that Afghanistan would remain neutral. Meanwhile the war, and British repressive measures against Indians who sought self-rule, had driven the revolutionaries to seek foreign assistance. As a result of the *Komagata Maru* tragedy, many Sikhs, led by Har Dayal, infiltrated into USA and Germany. They were joined by others. The German government extended their support more because of hostility to Britain rather than sympathy for India. The German Union of Friendly India was formed, Har Dayal playing a prominent role. As soon as the war started Har Dayal was joined by Raja Mahendra Pratap. A mission was planned to help in the Indian struggle for freedom, which was to visit Afghanistan among other places. The members of the mission were given a royal welcome and received by Habibullah who was sympathetic to the Indian cause. This was resented by the British, but still the Amir managed to handle them tactfully so that they even increased his annual subsidy. A large section of the Afghans did not appreciate their king's subservience to the British, and perhaps on their insistence he put forward a claim to be represented at the Peace Conference which followed the first world war. The British government refused the request on the ground that only the belligerents were to be included, even though the Amir had always championed their cause 'often at personal risk to himself'.[18] After this Habibullah's popularity gradually declined. In October 1918, while he was on a shooting trip in the Legham valley, he was killed by an assassin who stealthily entered his tent in the night. His brother Nasrullah who was in the shooting party proclaimed himself king. His nephew Amanullah, a younger son of Habibullah, however,

18 Major General J.G. Elliot, *The Frontier*, Cassell, London, 1968, p. 49.

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won over the army by promising to double their pay, and with their help got a hold on the treasury and the arsenal. Backed by this support he overthrew Nasrullah, had his uncle arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment on the charge of having murdered Habibullah, and proclaimed himself king. Amanullah's popularity was shortlived. He soon antagonised the army as well as a powerful religious sect among his subjects. His treatment of Nasrullah too alienated many. In a bid to regain his position he proclaimed a Jihad and sent an army to invade India. The Amir indeed could not have chosen a better time. Many regular units of the Indian army were still in Palestine and Mesopotamia. The troops were short of munitions, transport and supplies, and were absolutely unprepared for a war. Indians were discontented for having been dragged into a foreign war in which they could possibly have no interest. They were disappointed with the indifference of the British to their desire for real representative government (the reforms had not yet materialised). Then there were the Indian Muslims who might make common cause with the Afghans in a religious war. Indeed Mohammed Ali in his speech at Erode was reported to have said that the Indian Muslims would join the Afghans if a Jihad was proclaimed.[19] Not only the Muslim leader but even Gandhi, declared :

> 'I would, in a sense, certainly assist the Amir of Afghanistan if he waged war against the British government. That is to say I would openly tell my countrymen that it would be a crime to help a government which had lost the confidence of the nation to remain in power.'[20]

The Afghans attacked the Khyber Pass on 6 May 1919. The irregular British militia there, held out heroically despite the fact that the khilafat agitators had supported the cause of the Jihad, the Afridi tribesmen had deserted to the enemy, and reinforcements from Peshawar were delayed by a rebellion in

19 *The History and Culture of the Indian People* (ed.) R.C. Majumdar, Bhavan, 1969, Vol. XI, p. 812.

20 *Ibid*, p. 813, *op. cit.* (*The Young India*, dt. 4 May 1921.)

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the city. The attack was repulsed, and British troops advanced as far as the Khurd Khyber defile. Kabul was bombarded by the Royal Flying Corps with devastating effect. The Afghan attack on the Thal was beaten back by a force under Brigadier-General, Dyer. Similarly the Afghans were unable to capture Chitral. The British crossed the frontier near Chaman and took the Afghan fort of Spin Baldak.

On 28 May 1919 the Amir suspended hostilities and asked for peace. A treaty was signed at Rawalpindi on 8 August. The payment of the annual subsidy to the Amir was stopped and the arrears of subsidy due to the previous Amir were confiscated. The privilege of importing arms, ammunition and munitions of war was withdrawn. It was recognised by the British that Afghanistan was officially free and independent in its internal and external affairs.

Towards the end of 1920 relations between India and Afghanistan were again strained because of the Amir's friendliness towards Russia. News of a possible Russo-Afghan pact caused the Indian government anxiety, and a British mission was sent to Kabul under Sir Henry Dobbs. Meanwhile the Mahsuds and Afridi tribesmen rebelled, and there were constant raids on British convoys. Conflict, however, was avoided, and after long negotiations another peace treaty was signed at Kabul on 22 November 1921, after the Afghan government had given an assurance that they would not allow any Russian consulates. The terms provided for exchange of ministers and consuls and reaffirmed the Durand Line as the Indo-Afghan frontier. The privilege of importing customs free arms and ammunition so long as it did not constitute a danger to India's security, was restored. The Afghan war did not secure any benefits either for India or for Afghanistan. Despite a lot of fighting, the position (except for the loss of the Amir's subsidy) remained more or less the same as it was before the war. The diversion, however, secured Amanullah's position for some time, till his measures to westernise Afghanistan evoked the hostility of the mullahs and led to his abdication in 1929.

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Appraisement

Although Chelmsford's name is associated, along with that of Montagu, with the much publicised reforms of 1919, in reality he had little sympathy for giving Indians real liberty in anything. He justified curtailing the freedom of the press on the ground that India's newspapers 'magnify the ills from which she suffers', ascribing them all to an alien government, and 'encourage that lack of discipline and of respect for all authority that has done so much to swell the rank of secret revolution'. In other words he wanted the press to dance to the tune of the English piper. The viceroy referred to Gandhi as a charlatan and called his non-cooperation campaign 'the most foolish of all foolish schemes'. If Chelmsford had his own way probably even the superficial reforms which came as a sop to the Indians, would not have come. Addressing Edward Buck at a farewell banquet at the United Service Club, Simla, on 11 October 1920 he said 'Well Buckie, I have fallen between two stools. The services think I sold the pass, meekly submitting to Montagu. Indians consider me a reactionary, a tool in the hands of the services. Well, history will judge'.[21] There was no need for history to judge, for Chemlsford had for once, passed the best judgement possible on himself.

Lord Reading (1921-26)

Lord Reading, who became viceroy in 1921, was born in a humble Jew family and had worked his way up as lord chief justice in England. He had been ambassador to the USA before being appointed viceroy of India.

Lord Reading was in some respects fairer than his predecessors in regard to his Indian subjects. He appointed an Indian engineer to look after the viceregal lodge when the British officer went on leave, despite the opposition of the chief engineer of the public works department. When the first Indian accountant general proposed as a precaution against [misappropriation, an inventory of all furniture, paintings, carpets and

21 Durga Das, *India, From Curzon to Nehru & After*, Collins, 1969, p. 75.

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valuables in the viceroy's, house, he enthusiastically welcomeb the suggestion to the consternation of English officers of the Secretariate.

The Prince of Wales's Visit

In his opposition to the Indian nationalists, however, Reading was as uncompromising as any other governor general. An important event of his reign was the visit of the Prince of Wales, and he tried hard to ensure that the Prince got a resounding welcome. He would have been better advised to have put off the visit, for the Indian leaders were in a belligerent mood after the high dose of repression the nationalists had been subjected to. Reading invited Gandhi to the viceregal lodge on 13 May 1921 to win his support in organising a befitting reception to the British Prince. But the meeting did not come off well, and while appreciating the gesture, Gandhi said 'I see no change of heart.' The viceroy tactlessly made a public speech in which he disparaged the Ali brothers for preaching violence. This embarrassed Gandhi who intensified his non-cooperation movement.

At this time a clash occurred between Hindus and the demobilised soldiers, many of them Muslims, who had returned from Mesopotamia to their homes on the Malabar coast. Being inflamed by Mohammed Ali's speeches in South India, they perpetrated acts of rape, loot, conversion and murder on the Hindus. Reading exploited these differences to the full in order to weaken the nationalists. Gandhi announced that the civil disobedience movement would begin on 17 November 1921 when the Prince of Wales was due to arrive.

The Prince's landing in Bombay was marked by riots and the closure of shops. Much to Gandhi's chagrin the violence led to many deaths through police firing. He had already issued a warning to his followers that if the movement was not peaceful he would withdraw it. So now he put off civil disobedience and went on a self-purificatory fast. Despite this, Reading got the nationalist leaders C.R.Das, Motilal Nehru, Lajpat Rai and Azad arrested in the beginning of December 1921. The Prince fared no better in Calcutta and Delhi, where *hartal*, boycott

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and hostile demonstrations greeted him. In the capital the highlight of his visit was his address to the Chamber of Princes. The address was meant to obtain support for the Raj. But the princes were sadly disillusioned when towards the end of Reading's reign the Nizam wrote to him pleading for restoration of Berar and was coldly informed 'No Indian ruler can claim to negotiate on equal terms with the British government. Paramountcy is truly paramount.'

Reacting to the hostility shown to the Prince of Wales, the British prime minister, decrying Indians in the services, observed in the House of Commons 'The British civil servants are the steel frame of the whole structure. If you take that steel frame out the fabric will collapse.'

The Congress session was held in December 1921 in Ahmedabad. As C.R.Das was in jail, Hakim Ajmal Khan presided. Gandhi, who was living in his *ashram* at Sabarmati, was the most striking figure and had the largest following. He advocated keeping the issue of dominion status open. The Congress movement became more and more village oriented. The *charkha* (wooden spinning wheel) became its symbol. An all-parties conference in 1922 presided over by Sankaran Nair adopted Jinnah's proposal for a Round Table Conference. It was decided that the viceroy should be approached for this, and meanwhile the civil disobedience movement would be suspended. But Reading rejected the proposal. It was, therefore, decided to launch civil disobedience under the leadership of Vallabhbhai Patel. Meanwhile at Chauri Chaura in the United Provinces the police tried to halt a procession of demonstrators. There was a clash and firing. When their ammunition was exhausted the police withdrew. The mob surrounded the police station and set fire to it, burning alive twenty-two policemen. Gandhi called off the civil disobedience movement, and as penance fasted for five days. In England Montagu remarked that Indians should not dwell 'in the very mistaken belief that we contemplate retreat from India.' Lord Birkenhead spoke of 'Britain's hard fibre.' Gandhi retorted in an article in *Young India* 'The British empire, which is based upon organised exploitation of physically weaker races of the earth and upon a continuous exhibition of brute force, cannot live if there is a

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just God ruling the universe.' A fortnight later Gandhi was arrested on a charge of sedition and sentenced to six years's imprisonment.

Indianisation of the Services

The matter regarding Indianisation of the services was taken up by a commission appointed in 1922 under the chairmanship of Lord Lee of Farnham. It recommended Indians for all services except the ICS and the IP, and holding of competitive examinations in India as well as in Britain. One-fifth of the posts were to be filled by promotion from the provincial services. Regarding the military, Lord Rawlinson, the commander-in-chief, had a scheme for officering eight units of infantry or cavalry by Indians. This meant exclusion of Indian officers in general, and caused great resentment. Reading set up the Indian Sandhurst Committee and invited Jinnah and Motilal Nehru as members. The Committee recommended increased admission of Indians to Sandhurst and the opening of a similar institution in India by 1933. These were small concessions, and right till the end of the British rule in India no Indian could rise to a post higher than that of a brigadier.

The Parting of the Ways

After the arrest of Gandhi, the Congress broke up into two groups. One of them, later known as the Swaraj Party, led by Motilal Nehru, Ajmal Khan and Vithalbhai Patel, had as their goal 'destroy from within.' They wished to carry the struggle into the legislatures by capturing the seats in them through election. The other, of whom the prominent leaders were C. Rajagopalchari ('C.R.') and Rajendra Prasad, were in favour of working on Gandhi's line of peaceful *satyagraha* from outside. The formation of the 'destroy from within' group was a consequence of certain incidents which showed the determination of British rulers to check any Indian advance towards self-government. In the central assembly a move was made for doubling the salt tax. This led to a nation-wide agitation and the assembly rejected the measure. But the

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viceroy certified it as essential and it was adopted, thus showing the futility on depending on the assemblies for Indian betterment. At Nagpur and Jabalpur the Congress flag hoisted on government buildings during a *hartal* campaign was pulled down and trampled underfoot by the police. In the United Provinces a British official managed to get permission to file a libel suit against a Liberal politician without the knowledge of the minister concerned.

At the Congress session held at Gaya differences between the Motilal Nehru and C.R. groups came to the surface. But greatly to the surprise of the former, Gandhi's influence was so overpowering (even though he was behind the prison bars) that C.R.'s party won the day.

In the Punjab communal tension was brought about by certain unfortunate incidents. Mian Fazli Husain resigned from the Congress in 1920, and formed a group to which he gave the name, the Rural Party. He and Lala Harkishan were selected as ministers by Sir Edward Maclagan, governor of the Punjab. Fazli Husain gave preference to many Muslims in appointment to important posts. He also championed separate electorates. As a reaction the Akalis became active and began to use *gurdwaras* as platforms for their propaganda. At the Nankana Sahib Gurdwara however the mahant got them thrown out with the help of the Pathan guard. 130 Akalis were killed.

Gandhi was released on 5 February 1924 on health grounds. Soon after, a serious Hindu-Muslim riot occurred at Kotah in which over 155 people were killed and Hindu temples and property were destroyed. The trouble was sparked off by an anti-Islamic poem circulated by mischief mongers. Gandhi promptly went on a 21 day fast at the residence of Mohammed Ali. Motilal Nehru called a conference to foster communal unity. Indian leaders like Patel, Das and Motilal himself, however, did not quite agree with Gandhi's vicillating policy. 'How can we get rid of the Mahatma' Das said 'and put the people back on the road to the capture of power, now within our grasp?' The British, always on the look out for a chance to weaken the Congress, struck a blow at the extremist Swarajists by arresting Subhas Chandra Bose who was then the

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chief executive officer of the Calcutta Corporation. Others too were put behind the bars, and the charge was 'encouraging terrorism.' Gandhi saw through the British design and effected a quick compromise with Motilal Nehru and Das. He chose Jawaharlal Nehru to be his principal aide and general secretary of the Congress. On Das's death on 16 June 1925 Gandhi hurried to Calcutta to attend the funeral, and won over the Bengalis by his sympathetic utterances. In gratefulness they decided to popularise hand made *khadi* and spinning.

The Kanpur session of the Congress held in 1925 was presided over by Mrs Sarojini Naidu. The session recommended the use of Hindustani for all future conferences. In 1926, on a call from the Congress, the Swarajists withdrew from the legislatures after symbolically rejecting the first demand for budget grants. The 'destroy from within' campaign was put into cold storage.

Reading left in October 1926. His reign cannot be called successful, for by the time he left, relations between the Indians and their British rulers had become strained. Motilal Nehru and his supporters condemned the central assembly as they withdrew from it. Nevertheless he managed to carry out some useful measures. Racial discrimination in judicial trials was abolished. Excise duty imposed on Indian cotton in the interest of Lancashire textiles was done away with. Protection was given to the Indians steel industry. A Tariff Board was set up for the assistance of others which were in their infancy. British companies ceased to manage the Indian railway. Steps were taken to start the Indian Reserve Bank and a scheme of post office cash certificates to encourage savings. A commission on agriculture was appointed for the welfare of poor peasants. Reading was at heart an imperialist who believed in the might and superiority of the British arms. This is evident from his rebuff to the Nizam, whom he reminded 'Paramountcy is truly paramount.'

Lord Irwin (1926-31)

Lord Irwin took over as viceory in the summer of 1926. Addressing the central legislature in August 1927 he said

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'national self-government must be founded upon self-government and self-control of individuals.' His observation promised a better deal to Indian aspirations for *swaraj*, but in practice there remained more of good intention than actual achievement. Repression was intensified. The old device of dividing and ruling was continued. Excuses were invented for showing the utter impossibility of applying British standards to India.

The Progress of Nationalism

Dissensions in the Congress itself made it easier for the British to keep back self-rule. Following Gandhi's exit from active leadership, the Swaraj Party began to break up. Led by Jayakar, a section formed a dissident group known as the Responsivist Party. They were in favour of accepting ministerial office. Lajpat Rai and Madan Mohan Malaviya forn ed the Indian National Party on 3 April 1926 to fight for dominion status. A new element of Hindu communalism was introduced which estranged the Muslims, so that apart from Motilal none in the Swaraj Party could be elected to the UP legislature. While the annual Congress session was being held at Gauhati on 26 December 1926 Swami Shraddhanand was assassinated by a Muslim fanatic. This all the more created communal tension. Gandhi went round persuading people to accept *khadi* and advocating the use of Hindustani, but in the midst of his tour he got an urgent message from the viceroy inviting him to a talk at Delhi. The summons was not so much a gesture of goodwill as of expediency. The internal conflicts in the Congress provided just the proper moment to cast another Atlanta's apple in the race for *swaraj*. In Britain the elections were due in just a couple of years's time, and as likely as not they would return the Labour party which was known for its sympathy to Indian aspirations. The viceroy had nothing much to offer. The British cabinet's decision to appoint a commission headed by Sir John Simon to go into the question of further constitutional reforms failed to satisfy any section of the Indian intelligentsia largely because of it having an all-British membership. The viceroy explained that

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this was because an Indian member would not be unbiassed and unprejudiced and so their desire for self-rule 'could hardly fail to colour their judgement or her (India's) present capacity to sustain the role.' It was a strange argument, for it meant that those who asked for self-rule did not know what they were asking for. Such an attitude could hardly instil confidence in the minds of Indians and they expressed their disappointment by *hartals*, demonstrations and processions, with banners of 'Go back Simon' and black flags. In the assembly, Lajpat Rai moved a resolution condemning the commission and the house resounded with cries of *bande mataram*. But British strategy, deeper than the Indians thought, was to create a schism. The idea was that the report, when it came, would create a communal rift, just as other measures like the partition and the Minto-Morley reforms had done. As it happened the Indians themselves managed to do what the English aimed at. They proceeded to draw up a kind of model constitution, without realising the sharp differences among themselves. The Hindu Mahasabha, the Muslim League, the Sikhs, the depressed classes led by Bhim Rao Ambedkar all pulled different ways. Indians left no need for the British to divide and rule. The rule was already there and they made it easier by themselves creating division. A joint committee under the chairmanship of Motilal produced a blueprint for India's constitution. The main features were abolition of separate electorates, redistribution of provinces on a linguistic basis, adult franchise and votes for women. Obviously the model constitution could not satisfy the minorities who were by now clamouring for safeguards for their interests. Jinnah joined the Aga Khan and Sir Mohammed Shafi in organising an All-Parties Muslim Conference in Delhi on 1 January 1929. They demanded a federal system with complete autonomy and residuary powers with the states, separate electorates, reservation of a third of the seats in the central legislature for Muslims and the constitution of Sindh as a separate province. Non-Brahmins, Sikhs, the depressed classes and Christians, all believed that the Nehru committee had not done justice to them. The Ali brothers, who had befriended the Congress for long, were alienated. The committee report was in fact a big triumph for the British.

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In the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress held in December 1928 Gandhi suggested the acceptance of dominion status within a year. If the British government failed to give it, the Congress resolved to continue non-violent non-cooperation. The younger group, however, led by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Bose were not satisfied by anything short of complete independence. Even though they were outvoted, it was significant that they carried many even of the veteran members with them. The next session, held on 29 December 1929, which was presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru, opted for complete independence (*purna swaraj*) as the goal. The recurrence of violence during the year had disillusioned Gandhi, and he appealed to the young element in the Congress to substitute for it peaceful civil disobedience. In March Gandhi himself showed the way by his famous Dandi march, organised to break the salt laws which, he said, levied on 'the starving millions, the sick, the maimed and the utterly helpless', a tax which constituted 'the most inhuman poll tax that ingenuity of man can devise.' He drew his band of seventy-eight volunteers from the Sabarmati ashram and walked with them a distance of 241 miles in 24 days, passing through dozens of villages, pausing regularly to hold meetings. Gandhi was arrested by order of the viceroy. His volunteers were brutally *lathi*-charged despite their being non-violent and peaceful.

Of the civil disobedience movement, Lord Irwin observed 'it could not fail to involve India in irreparable misfortune and disaster.' The disaster came in the form of indiscriminate *lathi*-charges, torture, police excesses and repressive press laws. In some cases civil disobedience could not remain peaceful, despite Gandhi's admonitions. In a Bombay suburb the mob pelted the *lathi* wielding cops with brickbats.

Meanwhile in Britain, as expected, the elections of 1929 had ushered in the progressive Labour party. The prime minister, Ramsay MacDonald, invited Lord Irwin to London for consultations, and the outcome was a statement issued by the viceroy on behalf of the king that the 'natural issue of India's constitutional progress', was the attainment of dominion status. It was an observation which looked very nice on the surface, but meant really nothing. So Gandhi, Nehru and other prominent

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Congressmen went to seek a definite assurance from the viceroy. Thus cornered the viceroy said he couldn't be sure. That shattered Gandhi's faith in British promises. 'I have burnt my boats' he said.

Report of the Simon Commission

The much awaited Simon Commission report came out on 7 June 1930. Briefly it recommended termination of dyarchy, wider franchise with the inclusion of more women voters, the continuance of communal electorates, and protection of the rights of minorities. At the centre there was to be a Federal Assembly whose members would be elected by the method of proportional representation with safeguards for minorities. There would be, as before, nominated members too. The Council of State would consist of nominated members and the ones elected by an indirect system of election. The chief executive authorlty would continue to be the governor general in council, but the councillors would henceforth be appointed by the governor general. The Indian states were given particular mention, and provision was made for a Council for Greater India having representatives of the states as well as members representing British India. The Council would deal with 'matters of common concern.'

The observations of the Commission on what it considered to be the defects of local government are interesting. About elections to local bodies and the shortcomings of the elected representatives, the Commission. said 'questions of administration play little part in the elections, and communal, caste and personal considerations furnish in the majority of cases the motive power which takes the elector to the polling booth and decides the casting of his vote.'[22] About elected persons the Commission observed 'There is on the part of elected persons a general tendency to meddle and interfere in details of administration which should be left entirely to the paid official.'[23]

22 *Report of the Indian Statutory Commission 1930*, Vol. I, pp. 309-15 Quoted in C.H. Philip and others, *The Evolution of India and Pakistan*, Selected Documents Oxford, 1962, pp. 287-290.

23 *Ibid.*

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About collection of taxes by the local bodies the comment was 'In Great Britain a municipality expects to collect up to 98 or 99 per cent of the rates imposed by it, and a drop in collection to 95 per cent would be the subject of very close inquiry. But in municipalities in India since the Reforms, uncollected arrears have been mounting up to very large sums.'[24] The remarks ring true even after the gulf of half a century, and indeed constitute what remains one of the basic defects of Indian administration.

The Round Table Conference

The first Round Table Conference was inaugurated by the British king on 12 November 1930. It was presided over by Ramsay MacDonald the British prime minister. The Indian states and various parties in British India were represented, the notable exception being the Congress. The Muslim delegation demanded safeguards for Muslims, while Ambedkar wanted the depressed classes to be treated as a separate community for electoral purposes. Indian members favoured the introduction of the British parliamentary system in India. Jinnah said 'the quarrels between Hindu and Mussalman are founded only on the fear of domination.' The Conference was less of a concerted effort to reach a solution than a forum to ventilate differences. Each group was on its own. There were many pious resolutions and fond hopes, but no real achievement. The Congress refused to have anything to do with it, regarding the British promises too vague to deter it from its predetermined civil disobedience campaign. It did result in a little loosening up of the British net. Members of the Congress Working Committee who had been arrested were released. Sapru and Shastri, who had attended the Conference pleaded that negotiation be given a trial. The result was an invitation from the Viceregal Lodge for Gandhi.

The 'meeting of saints' as the viceroy's staff mockingly called it, took place in a cordial atmosphere. Gandhi made bigger news, but the astute viceroy proved to be the greater diplomat, for he managed to get more than he promised to give. Gandhi

24 *Ibid.*

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agreed to withdraw the civil disobedience movement. The Conference assented to reservations or safeguards 'in the interests of India, for matters like defence, external affairs, the position of the minorities, the financial credit of India, and discharge of obligations.' In return the viceroy promised a federation, withdrawal of the emergency ordinances, release of prisoners, permission to collect as much salt as one required for his own use and peaceful picketing (not boycott as a political weapon) for popularising Indian goods and against the use of alcohol and harmful drugs. Gandhi's surrender to the clause about safeguards and reservations hurt his colleagues in the Congress most. What was worse he sprung it on them as a kind of dismal surprise without telling them anything about it from before. Jawaharlal observed in agony:

> 'Were all our brave words and deeds to end in this? The independence resolution of the Congress, the pledge of January 26, so often repeated? So I lay and pondered on that March night, and in my heart there was a great emptiness as of something precious gone, almost beyond recall.'

The Gandhi-Irwin pact was endorsed by the Congress in its annual session held under the presidentship of Sardar Patel at Karachi on 29 March 1931. It was a curious exercise to accept and yet to assert, which sounded almost like bravado. The goal of complete independence (*purna swaraj*) was reiterated, despite the pact. Even though Gandhi had agreed to safeguards and reservations in respect of certain matters the Congress pompously observed that they would work towards giving the nation control over them. The younger section under the leadership of Subhas Bose opposed the agreement and maintained an attitude of sullen resentment during the Congress session, even though they did not actively oppose it.

Despite the unfavourable reaction to the pact, the Gandhi-Irwin meeting was significant. For the first time the British recognised the Congress as a body representative of Indian opinion, and Gandhi as its spokesman. Although in Britain Churchill spoke derisively of Gandhi as the half-naked fakir,

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in the US he got a great deal of favourable publicity. Dr J. Haynes of the Community Church of New York even called him 'Christ reborn.'

In 1929 when the central assembly met, a bomb was hurled on the floor of it. The finance member narrowly escaped, and fortunately none was hurt. Bhagat Singh, Batukeshwar Dutt, and one other person, were arrested for the outrage and sentenced to death. Gandhi pleaded with the viceroy for their reprieve, but Irwin would not agree. 'I could imagine no case' he said 'in which under the law the penalty has been more directly deserved.' Congressmen were sore with Gandhi for not having saved Bhagat Singh's life, but their accusation seems hardly justified. 'Loss and gain, life and death, honour and infamy' says sage Tulsidasa 'are in the hands of God.' It was God's will that Bhagat Singh should win immortality by a martyr's death. Gandhi could do nothing about it. But it can't be said he didn't try. Apart from pleading with the viceroy he made a powerful appeal to him on his charity as 'a great Christian' through the columns of *Young India*. He did say in reply to Irwin's critics that the commutation of the sentence was no part of the pact and the viceroy could not be accused of 'breach of settlement' on that ground. This indeed was the truth, and Gandhi's stand was not wrong. Nevertheless the executions, carried out on 23 March 1931, on the eve of Irwin's departure, were universally condemned. Jawaharlal declared 'the corpse of Bhagat Singh shall stand between us and England.' Subhas Bose and his group, the Navajawan Sabha, were more demonstrative in their protest. As Gandhi arrived at Karachi station for the Congress session, they waved black flags inscribed with the words 'Gandhi, go back.' Even the opposition parties in the central assembly showed their resentment. Sir Abdur Rahim, leader of the opposition, and Cowasji Jehangir, deputy leader of the Independents, left the house in protest.

Irwin, An Appraisement

Irwin left Bombay on 18 April 1931 on the expiry of his tenure as viceroy. He had tried to understand the people whom

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he governed and to do something for their aspirations. He was a man of simple habits, unlike the pompous English rulers who believed that keeping their distance was the best way of demonstrating their superiority. Godfearing, it was said of him that 'he fasted and knelt down to pray every Sunday'.[25] He would 'walk down to the tennis court carrying his canvas shoes and play with members of his staff in the full gaze of passers-by.'[26]. He had gentleness and humility, drinking to Gandhi's health during the talks, and laughing and joking as though they were old friends. He had a sense of justice too, as when he waited for Gandhi to actually break the salt law before arresting him. In a private letter to his father he wrote 'I am anxious to avoid arresting Gandhi if I can do so without letting a "Gandhi legend" establish itself that we are afraid to lay hands on him.'[27] But he could not rise to the Shakesperean glory of earthly power, 'when mercy seasons justice' ; refusing to commute Bhagat Singh's capital sentence to life imprisonment even though the revolutionary's bomb did not kill anyone.

Irwin gave India the metre-guage railway track on which trains could move with greater speed. He tried his little bit to modernise the country, expanding the air services, the commercial and industrial establishments, the banking organisation, broadcasting, wireless and irrigation. A number of significant events in the Indian national movement happened in Irwin's stewardship—the report of the Simon Commission, the talks with Gandhi and the first Round Table Conference. Irwin handled them all with ease. But repression in his time was probably the worst ever. 'Bones have been broken, private parts have been squeezed' wrote Gandhi in *Young India* 'for the purpose of making volunteers give up salt.' In dealing with Indian nationalists, most of whom were peaceful in their demonstrations, iron entered into the soul of Godfearing, gentle, Irwin.

26 Durga Das, *India From Curzon to Nehru and After*, Collins, 1969, p. 121.
26 *Ibid.*
27 *Essays in Modern History* (ed.) B.R. Nanda, Oxford, 1980, p. 104 *op. cit.*, Indian Office Records, Irwin to Halifax, no. 187. 7 April 1930 p. 286.

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Lord Willingdon (1931-36)

The new viceroy, Lord Willingdon, resumed office in April 1931. Unlike Irwin, he came to India determined to crush the Congress by every means possible. He proclaimed Gandhi to be a 'humbug', although later, on the insistence of the authorities in England he invited him to the Viceregal Lodge.

Willingdon revived the policy of repression and of sowing dissension among the parties in India. Gandhi wished to take Ansari and Inam Ali with him to the Round Table Conference as the Congress delegates, and he had obtained Irwin's assent for this. Willingdon gave his support to the Aga Khan and Fazli Husain instead, and turned down Gandhi's proposal.

The Second Round Table Conference

The Karachi session of the Congress held in 1931 decided unanimously that Gandhi should be the sole representative at the Round Table Conference. Meanwhile the English administrators, particularly in UP and the NWFP made a mockery of the pact made with Irwin. The Bombay government said that it must be the final judge of fact as well as of law. The viceroy supported the acts of his subordinates, leaving Gandhi thoroughly disgusted. With the assent of the Congress he decided not to go to the Conference. But strangely enough, he soon reversed his decision as the result of a last minute meeting with Willingdon in which government agreed to inquire into the complaint of coercion in land revenue collection in Surat district. A special train having been arranged for him, Gandhi sailed from Bombay on 29 August 1931.

At the Round Table Conference, which opened on 7 September, Gandhi claimed national status for the Congress. It represented, he said, the Muslims and the princes, apart from Hindus, and also all the other minorities. It was all right as a claim but it could hardly be substantiated when each group, the Sikhs, the Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and the depressed class,—all rejected any common agreement and pressed their own viewpoints. Ramsay MacDonald, the British premier exploited these communal disagreements to the full. Until,

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they were sorted out, he said, it would not be possible to go ahead with constitution making. Although some of the members agreed to abide by the prime minister's decision on the community problem, others didn't. Little headway was made in constitutional reforms, and in the second Conference the position did not advance much beyond what it was at the close of the first. It was much trouble for almost no gain, and Gandhi was back in Bombay on 28 December, 'landing in India with empty hands' as the European community triumphantly remarked. After having abjured the first Round Table Conference, the Congress had suddenly barged into the second, and that too with a one man delegation, when numbers would have been of advantage. The Indian delegates were always opposing each other instead of putting up a united front. Gandhi must have been a striking figure swathed in his home spun shawl. But idealism and humility which were his forte, were not just the proper requirements for such an occasion. Obstinate assertion would have done much better.

The third Round Table Conference (17 November 1932) was a flop. Only forty-six delegates participated, the Congress keeping away. It disillusioned the Indians even more and the Conservative dominated British government was far less sympathetic. The glamour of a federation seemed to have faded for the princes. The only new decisions were to make more women eligible for voting, and election to the federal upper chamber by provincial legislatures.

The Last Phase of Civil Disobedience

Returning from England, Gandhi found everything in a mess. Tales of woe from persecuted victims of British repression poured in. He learnt that the inquiry into police excesses in realising revenue in Surat which had persuaded him to agree to go for the Round Table Conference, had been a farce. Bhulabhai Desai and Vallabhbhai Patel had asked Gordon, the inquiring officer, to produce the relevant orders of the government in court. But these were not produced, and Desai and Patel dissociated themselves from the inquiry. In UP the Congress had started a no-rent campaign to protest against the

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unreasonably high rates demanded from the peasants. The administration made large scale arrests, among them Jawaharlal and Purushottamdas Tandon. In the NWFP a reign of terror was let loose on peaceful Red Shirt volunteers of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, known popularly as the Frontier Gandhi. In Bengal, as a result of ill-treatment of prisoners and the atrocities against no-tax campaigners, the inspector general of prisons and three magistrates were murdered. As a reprisal Chittagong was looted by non-official Europeans and a band of hooligans for three days. Gandhi was visibly moved. There was an exchange of telegrams between him and the viceroy, who expressed his willingness to talk, but made it clear that there would be no going back on the measures already approved by the British cabinet and enforced in Bengal, UP and NWFP with their assent. Gandhi offered to find out a solution after he had studied the position on the spot. But the Congress Working Committee was completely dismayed both by the Round Table Conference and the British repression. They considered they had been betrayed. Nothing short of complete independence with control over the various departments would satisfy them. If it was not forthcoming they would be forced to restart civil disobedience. Willingdon told them there was no question of any negotiation under such a threat. Four new ordinances were issued. Gandhi and Patel were arrested.

The Europeans were jubilant. Miller, the retiring President of the European Association of India, urged stronger action. 'Government of India' he said 'if anything, in my opinion, has erred on the side of leniency.' But other Englishmen had different views. Brailsford condemned in the *New Leader* the viceroy's refusal to give Gandhi a hearing. The *Times of India* called it regrettable. Verrier Elwin thought it was the government who 'deliberately provoked a conflict.'[28]

The British put all the blame on the Congress for the civil disobedience movement. It was, however, they who had gone back on the Gandhi-Irwin pact. There was no move for constitutional reform. The wrongs done on the volunteers of the previous civil disobedience campaign were not righted. In fact

28 Verrier Elwin, *Truth About India, Can we Get it* ? pp. 34-5.

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there were more arbitrary ordinances and more severity. Besides, the pact had permitted peaceful picketing and boycott. The Congress Working Committee had given a call for 'non-payment of taxes, boycott of foreign cloth, picketing of liquor shops and manufacture and collection of salt.' There was nothing in this which was not covered by the agreement made with Irwin. The few acts of violence were not the outcome of civil disobedience but expressions of rage at the torture and inhuman treatment practised by British officers. A delegation of the India League London consisting of three Britishers and only one Indian[29] visited many places during the movement and often actually saw the police *lathi*-charges, firings, torture and brutality. They found the volunteers, including a large number of women, invariably peaceful and the British officers and the police savage beyond description. A British officer, Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Osborne quotes an official as telling him: 'I give you my word that after some of my punitive police have stationed in a village for a few days, the spirit of the toughest of the political agitators is broken.' When the lieutenant asked him, how, the official explained 'Well they will help themselves to everything. Within twenty-four hours there will not be a virgin or a four-anna piece left in the village.'[30]

At the apogee of the civil disobedience movement Gandhi suddenly cried halt. What worried him now was the announcement of the communal award by the British prime minister, whom the abortive Round Table Conference of 1931 had authorised to take a decision. The award upheld separate electorates for Muslims and gave the depressed classes a fixed percentage of seats in the legislatures. For the British such separation was yet another opportunity of creating discord. Gandhi guessed as much. He had already written to Sir Samuel Hoare that if the depressed classes were given separate electorates he would fast unto death. Now he carried out his threat. The fast created a flutter in the US, where Gandhi had many

29 Miss Monica Whately, Miss Ellen Wilkinson (ex MP), Leonard W. Matters and V.K. Krishna Menon.

30 *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, (ed.) R.C. Majumdar, Bhavan, 1969, Vol. XI, pp. 519-20 *op. cit.*

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admirers. In India it caused anxiety and consternation. In an emergency meeting held first at Bombay and then at Poona, to which Ambedkar, leader of the depressed classes, was particularly invited, a workable settlement was reached. According to this agreement, known as the Poona Pact, there was to be a common electorate with 148 seats in the provincial legislatures (as against 71 previously) and 18 per cent seats in the central legislature. There would be a primary election by voters of the depressed classes alone of four candidates for each reserved seat, and the election by the general (Hindu) constituencies was restricted to these alone.[31] The agreement was a substantial gain for the depressed classes, and gave them wider concessions than the prime minister's award. The *Statesman* observed 'A further result (of the past) is that the existence of untouchability is heavily emphasised in provinces like Bengal and the Punjab, where there was little thought of it before. The Poona Pact was a remarkable specimen of political mismanagement.'[32]

Gandhi broke his fast on the sixth day. Jawaharlal Nehru could not understand why he had undertaken it at all. 'After so much sacrifice and brave endeavour' he wrote in anguish, 'was our movement to tail off into something insignificant?' Hindu leaders who had brought about the Poona Pact met at Bombay under the chairmanship of Malaviya and resolved that untouchables would have the same rights as caste Hindus in the use of public facilities. This was the signal for a general campaign to free the untouchables from social disabilities. Temples and public wells were thrown open to them. But suddenly Gandhi announced a self-purificatory fast for 21 days 'for greater vigilance and watchfulness in connection with the Harijan cause'. The government decided to release him, for nothing could please them better than harnessing Gandhi to a side issue. But it had no intention of giving the Congress a free hand. When Gandhi appealed for the withdrawal of the repressive ordinances and release of the volunteers as a condition of suspension of civil disobedience, Willingdon snubbed

31 *Ibid*, p. 521.
32 The *Statesman*, 26 February 1933.

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him. 'There is no intention' he declared 'of negotiating with the Congress for a withdrawal of the civil disobedience movement or of releasing prisoners with a view to arrive at any settlement with them in regard to these unlawful activities.' Willingdon flatly refused to grant an interview to Gandhi, much less give any heed to his offer. Congressmen were in a fix. Gandhi appeared to have lost all interest in the movement and the British government was in no mood to relent. A half-hearted compromise was made as a face saving device. There was to be no mass civil disobedience, but individuals could still resort to it. Some did; the lead being taken by Gandhi himself. But with isolated people courting arrest, the strength of joint endeavour was taken away from the movement. With thousands still languishing in jails, and tired persons too exhausted to face repeated convictions, civil disobedience died a slow death. It was a sad end to a glorious endeavour. Gandhi undertook a fast again in prison as a protest for conducting the anti-untouchability campaign. He was released in view of his critical conditions and plunged into his cherished fight for the Harijans.

Gandhi Puts the Clock Back

The decisions of the Round Table Conferences were embodied in a White Paper in March 1933. In London it was considered a declaration of considerable importance, but it had a cold reception in India. A joint committee under the chairmanship of Lord Linlithgow was appointed to consider the proposals, and delegates were invited from India for consultation. Twenty-one came from British India and seven from the Indian states. But as not one of their recommendations was finally accepted, the consultation was a farce. The scheme was ultimately embodied in the Government of India Act of 1935. The Act envisaged a federal structure for India, incorporating the governors's provinces and the Indian states which chose to accede to it. The federal legislature would consist of the governor general as the king's representive, the Council of State and the House of Assembly. Burma was to be separated from India and given a new constitution along the lines of the Act

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of 1919. In the provinces the governor, ministers chosen by him and holding office during his pleasure, and the two houses the legislative assembly and the legislative council, formed the government. But the governor general in respect of the central houses and the governor for the state ones, reserved overriding powers in respect of the bills introduced in them. He could give his assent or withhold it, or return it for reconsideration along with such amendments as he suggested. This virtually meant that the final decision rested not with the members of the houses but with the head of the state. The governor could also, with the concurrence of the governor general, assume all the powers exercised by the provincial body. No wonder Indians saw in the Act 'a new charter of bondage.' Jawaharlal called it a 'charter of slavery.'

The collapse of civil disobedience was described by Vithalbhai Patel as 'a confession of failure.' It created a vacuum, and this was eagerly filled by the section of the Congress which was in favour of entering the legislature and trying for reforms from within. This led to the revival of the Swaraj Party. In 1919 Gandhi, the apostle of non-cooperation and civil disobedience, had said 'In my opinion, the beauty and efficacy of *satyagraha* are so great and the doctrine so simple, that it can be preached even to children.'[33] In 1920 he had rejected the move for council entry and had started non-cooperation. But now to the Swarajists led by Ansari, Bidhan Chander Roy and Bhulabhai Desai, he said 'I have made an independent study of the council entry question. It appears to me there has always been a party within the Congress wedded to the idea of council entry. The reins of the Congress should be in the hands of that group, and that group alone needs the name of Congress.' Thus Gandhi put the clock back fourteen years—years of sacrifices, suffering and travail.

The government welcomed the new move, and responded by lifting the ban on the Congress. A meeting was held at Patna on 16 May 1934 in which the main discussion was on the communal award. No agreement could be reached, and the Working Committee concluded 'in view of the division of

33 Mahatma Gandhi's statement on *satyagraha*, 1 November 1919.

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opinion (the Congress) can neither accept nor reject the communal award.' Malaviya and Aney were opposed to this attitude. They and their group broke away and formed the Congress Nationalist Party. The strength of the different parties were now such that the Independents led by Jinnah held the balance and could sway the house as they chose.[34]

On 17 September 1934 Gandhi announced his retirement from the Congress, saying 'I am a hindrance to it.' At the next session held at Bombay he got the All India Village Industries Association formed under J.C. Kumarappa. Henceforth he spent his time touring the villages and propagating his favourite doctrines of *khadi* and Harijan uplift. The British continued to devise ways of dividing the country. Their latest plan was to form Hindu, Muslim and princely zones, hoping that the pro-British Muslims would combine with the princes in outvoting Hindus in a federal set-up. It was only a few farseeing administrators who could realise the futility of trying to restrain the urge for freedom. Malcolm Hailey, UP governor said at a farewell dinner at Chhattar Manzil Club Lucknow in 1934 'It is impossible to suppress a nationalist movement.' With prophetic insight he added, 'The future government of India would be largely socialistic.'[35]

A change was indeed overtaking the Congress. The new creed of communism which had shaken Europe, was infiltrating into India. A number of socialistic organisations emerged like the All India Kisan Sabha, the All India Students Federation and the All India Trade Union Congress (which had been dormant for long). A socialist left wing took birth under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose. Jawaharlal believed that one had to choose between communism and some form of fascism, and for him the former creed was the choice. Bose believed a synthesis between the two was possible. Jawaharlal, who presided over the Congress session at Lucknow in the middle of April 1936, tried out his new

34 Congress 44; Congress Nationalist 11: Europeans 11; nominated 39; Independents 22.

35 Durga Das, *India From Curzon to Nehru and After*, Collins, 1969, p. 167 *op. cit.*

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creed without much success. A socialist motion for wrecking the constitution and refusing ministership was rejected by 487 votes to 255. He took the defeat stoically and realised that the old guard of the Congress still reigned supreme. Even then he managed to induct three enthusiastic socialists in the Working Committee—Jayaprakash Narayan, Narendra Dev and Achyut Patwardhan. Jawaharlal stayed on, largely due to the irresistible magnetism of Gandhi whom once he had called 'amazingly backward'. With his mind Jawaharlal kept on opposing Gandhi, but in his heart there was overpowering admiration for him, only a little short of worship. The Mahatma may not know all the answers, but fading away before his aura of earnest truth, all questions seemed to be meaningless.

Muslim Politics

Almost simultaneously with the Congress session at Lucknow, Jinnah held a meeting of the Muslim League in Bombay. The Muslims opposed the federal part of the Act of 1935 but were in favour of contesting the elections to the provincial legislatures. While denouncing the safeguards, the League recommended that 'having regard to the conditions prevailing at present in the country, the provincial scheme of the constitution be utilised for what is worth.'[36] Jinnah had said at a meeting of the Muslim League in Lahore in May 1924 'I am almost inclined to say that India will get dominion responsible government the day the Hindus and Muslims are united.' But in the decade following, his views had radically changed. Speaking in March 1936 at Delhi he said 'We think of the interests of our community. ...The Hindus and Muslims must be organised separately, and once they are organised they will understand each other better.' The observation was a pointer to the partition of India.

Willingdon, An Estimate

Lord Willingdon came to India determined to oppose the

36 R. Coupland, *The Constitutional Problem in India*, Oxford, 1945.

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Indian national movement. All his acts were calculated to create division between political leaders and to weaken them as much as possible. Even at the outset he favoured the Aga Khan-Fazli group with this object, and refused to allow Ansari, whom Gandhi wanted to take with him, to attend the Round Table Conference. He was contemptuous of Mahatma Gandhi calling him 'a humbug', and did not care to invite him to solve a crisis as Irwin had done. His reign is filled with incidents of savagery against peaceful demonstrators. In a sense it was tragic also, for it witnessed two terrible earthquakes, at Bihar and Quetta. After Curzon, Lord Willingdon was perhaps the most unpopular viceroy India has had.

Lord Linlithgow (1936-44)

Lord Linlithgow had served on the Royal Commission on Indian Agriculture as its chairman before taking over as viceroy. He had also presided over the deliberations of the joint committee on Indian constitutional reforms (1933-34). Thus he had some knowledge of Indian affairs, however secondhand.

The Failure of Federation

The reforms of 1935 had provided for a Federation of India consisting of the governor's and the chief commissioner's provinces along with such of the Indian states as 'might have acceded or may thereafter accede to federation.' Each state acceding would have to sign an instrument of accession which defined the liabilities and limitations the federal scheme entailed, in return for representation in it. The Act of 1935 said that when states joined federation, their rulers were to exercise in relation to their states such functions as may be vested in them by or under the Act. They would also have to give effect to the provisions of the Government of India Act in their states. A condition prerequisite to the forming of the federation was that it would come into effect when the states acceding were enough to fill half their total quota of seats in the federal upper house, and also included half of the population of all the states put together.

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The states were given a sizable representation. Their total population was less than a quarter of that of the entire country, while their quotas in the federal legislatures were 40 per cent and 33⅓ per cent. Still they didn't join. The reason was that the restrictions on their paramountcy which the Act placed. The rulers hesitated to surrender their soveriegnty for the uncertain privileges federation promised. The entire history of British relations with the Indian states was one of coercion, injustice and high-handedness. This made the princes suspicious of new moves to deprive them of power. It was better to rule than be ruled. Besides the princes, [who had been accustomed to concentration of power in their hands, were reluctant to commit themselves irrecoverably to the democratic process which a federation entailed. They also wanted concessions like guarantees in respect of the land revenue which formed the major source of income, and assurances regarding customs and excise, salt tax and the match monopoly.

In an effort to bring the rulers within the federation, Linlithgow sent them a circular embodying all the conditions of accession, and asked them to exercise their choice one way or the other within six months. A week later the rulers had a conference in Bombay, and as a result of the deliberations decided to keep out of the federation, but hoped the door would still be left open for them. By the time the war broke out in 1939 not a single big state had agreed to federate. There was no option but to give up the scheme of federation for the time being. The princes's hesitancy was not without reason. They realised that once they lost their identity, there was no knowing where they would end up. They felt much like the fly whom the spider invited into her web, and indeed when they were finally sucked up in 1947 they became vexed souls with dwindling privy purses.

The Formation of Provincial Governments

The second part of the 1935 reforms had a less dismal fate. Nehru was against the acceptance of office, but the Congress Working Committee decided to contest the elections of 1936-7. The Congress election manifesto stated that the party would

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seek to wreck the Reforms Act while the Muslim League promised to work for provincial autonomy.[37] The Congress swept the polls and won clear majorities in five of the eleven provinces, namely Madras, United Province, the Central Provinces, Bihar and Orissa. It was in a position to form a stable government in Bombay and the NWFP.

Victory having been achieved, the next question was forming the government in the various provinces. The All India Congress Committee permitted acceptance of office on condition 'that the governor would not use his special powers of interference or set aside the advice of ministers in regard to constitutional activities.' Such an assurance the governors were not prepared to give, for they could not go beyond the framework of the Government of India Act of 1935. Linlithgow resolved the deadlock by giving a long statement, the purport of which was that such interference, if at all, would be very rare. 'You may count on me' he concluded 'in face even of bitter disappointment, to strive untiringly towards the full and final establishment in India of the principles of parliamentary government.' The Congress having given the green signal, ministries were constituted.

The Working of Non-Congress Ministries

Bengal was headed by Fazlul Huq, leader of the Praja Party and a nationalist Muslim. He wanted to form a ministry along with the Congress which had the largest seats but for some accountable reason the Congress High Command turned down the proposal. The Fazlul Huq ministry managed to get most of the detinues and revolutionaries released. As a result of public agitation fanned by Subhas Bose, the Black Hole monument in Calcutta was removed. The Fazlul Huq government failed to maintain law and order and there were serious communal riots.

In the field of reforms the position of the tenants was somewhat improved, and effort was made to introduce primary education. A series of tenancy laws placed restrictions on

37 Durga Das, *India from Curzon to Nehru and After*, Collins, p. 175.

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landlords. Their power of recovering rent from tenants was curtailed, they could no longer charge fees on transfer of holdings or enhance rents within a period of ten years. The rate of interest they could charge on rent arrears was halved. Tenants were given protection in mortgages and relief in rural indebtedness. The maximum charges on secured loans was fixed as 8 per cent simple interest per year, and on unsecured loans 10 per cent. No dent could, however, be made in educational reform. A bill for setting up a board of secondary education was introduced. But the communal composition of the proposed board evoked strong opposion from Hindus, and the proposal was abandoned. Other measures introduced were insurance against natural calamities, maternity relief for working women, regulation of hours of business establishments and facilities to shop assistants, and aid to the rural unemployed. Not so salutary was the separate representation given to Muslims, Anglo-Indians and the depressed classes on the Calcutta municipality, which consequently became a hotbed of dissensions.

In the Punjab a stable ministry was formed by Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, leader of the National Unionist Party. As in Bengal, the first act of the new ministry was the release of prisoners. The law and order situation remained just as bad as in Bengal. There were communal riots, and a major dispute between Sikhs and Muslims took place over the Sahidgunje mosque.

A number of reforms were carried out by various acts passed by the legislatures both for the peasants and the townsmen. The poor section of cultivators got benefits. Restrictions were placed on the transfer of agricultural land to money-lenders and mortgagees. Easy terms were provided for the liquidation of all mortgages executed before 1901. Payment of fair prices was ensured in the markets for goods cultivators brought for sale. Only genuine money-lenders who had been registered by the government could sue cultivators in the law courts for repayment of loans. Creditors were prevented from charging exorbitant rates of interest, from having debtors arrested for non-payment or seizing their property. The control of village panchayats was strengthened and extended. Aid was made

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available for cottage industries. A five year plan of rural development with a provision of 10 lakh of rupees a year was formulated.

For urban areas a tax chargeable from landlords was levied on immovable property. A general sales tax was imposed. Local Congressmen agitated violently against the measures, but ultimately they were enforced. Labour laws were rationalised, and regular holidays and closing hours introduced. Employment of children under 14 was prohibited unless they were genuine apprentices. Local authorities were empowered to make primary education compulsory for boys between the ages of 6 and 12 and for girls from 6 to 11 years of age. The number of schools rose, and more than 9,000 girls attended classes in the year. Stress was placed on adult education and a five year programme was adopted for making people literate.

In Assam the large number of political parties, as many as fourteen, made the task of forming a government difficult. Sir Syed Mohammed Saadulia formed a government with a precarious majority. Soon, however, the government was defeated and the ministry resigned. Gopinath Bardoloi, the Congress leader, then formed a coalition ministry. No momentous reforms were undertaken. Land dues payable by poor agriculturists were reduced, a few political prisoners released, and one of the two divisional commissionerships abolished.

In Sindh the condition of law and order was deplorable. There were communal riots, and in Sukkur they lasted for more than two days. In 1942 fanatical tribesmen known as Hurs created a reign of terror, so much so, that the Central government had to intervene and martial law was proclaimed. The governments proved unstable, and successive leaders formed shortlived ministries.[38] Some measures of reform were introduced. Consumption of liquor was restricted, the administrative machinery was organised, primary education was made compulsory for the children of the better class of zamindars.

38 These were Sir Ghulam Hussian Hidayatullah a Muslim landowner, Khan Bahadur Allah Baksh, another big landowner, and Mir Bandeh Ali Khan.

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Relief was given to the debtors, and incentives to industry. A fund of rupees 12 lakh was set apart for famine relief.

Despite their limitations of instability and the defects inherent in coalition, these ministries managed to introduce useful reforms. In the maintenance of law and order, however, they were far from successful.

The Performance of Congress Ministries

Barring a minor tussle between the governors and the newly formed ministries, it was smooth sailing. The clash came on the issue of release of prisoners. The UP chief minister, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, under pressure from the Congress High Command advised the release of fifteen political prisoners who were in jail for violence. Bihar followed suit. Considering that these releases would have an adverse effect on the adjoining provinces of Bengal and Punjab where agitation was going on for 'release of similar detinues in large numbers, the viceroy asked the governors concerned to withhold permission. Thereupon the UP and Bihar ministries resigned. The issue was considered at the Haripura session of the Congress, and Gandhi was for reconciliation. 'All that was needed' he said 'was that the governors should give an assurance that they were not usurping the powers of the ministers.' The governor general expressed his desire to carry on the progressive policy. The crisis blew over and the ministries were in place once more. What was more, the prisoners were soon released.

Congressmen who had loudly opposed the policies of the British government, found themselves cornered when, as ministers, they in turn faced opposition. And they used more or less the same methods in repressing it, as the British had used. Gandhi, the originator of civil disobedience, defending such action said 'incitement to violence and manifestly violent speeches' could not be ignored.[39] When one is in the saddle, then only can he know the difficulty of controlling a unruly horse.

Congress had promised the peasants much more than it could

39 The *Harijan*, 23 October 1937.

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perform. Their frustration led to riots in Bihar in which crops were looted and the land ploughed up. Disorders broke out in UP and there were agitations in the other provinces. Ministers did not work in a coordinated manner, each pulling his own way. Instead of concentrating on policy matters premiers often got lost in files, trying to prove themselves to be superior civil servants. They unnecessarily meddled with appointments, transfers and promotions proving true the comment of the Simon Commission about Indian government 'there is on the part of elected persons a general tendency to meddle and interfere in details of administration which should be left entirely to the paid official.'[40] The need for financial stringency came in the way of many social reforms, like that of prohibition on which Gandhi was particularly keen.

Nevertheless the Congress ministries managed to get through some substantial reform measures, or at least to initiate them. These primarily concerned education, prohibition and Harijan welfare. A new concept was that of basic education or the Wardha scheme. The idea behind this was that education should be work oriented and productive, so that it could pay for itself through the sale of articles made by the students. A Basic Education Board was set up in Bihar at the end of 1938 and a training school for basic teachers at Patna. Fifty basic schools were started as an experiment. The United Provinces, Central Provinces and Bombay also took steps to introduce this type of education. Another measure adopted by Congress governments was the drive for removing adult illiteracy, which had already been initiated by the non-Congress provinces of Bengal and the Punjab.

Free education was introduced for children of the depressed classes. The Bombay government in a half-hearted gesture, passed an Act permitting the trustees of Hindu temples to admit, if they wished, Harijans even if custom or the Instrument of Trust debarred them. Even though a start was thus made, legislation for Harijan uplift was strikingly inadequate.

40 The Simon Commission on the Defects of Local Government, 1930. Quoted in C.H. Philips and others, *The Evolution of India and Pakistan*, Oxford, 1962, p. 288.

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Prohibition was then, as ever, a ticklish subject. It was Gandhi's favourite, but the prospect of seriously affecting the already wrecked economy, excise duties being 17 per cent of the revenues, dampened much of the enthusiasm of the Congress ministries. Bombay took the lead with a scheme for total prohibition in a three years period, but had to offset the resultant loss by a strongly resented tax on urban immovable property. Other provinces went slow, proclaiming only a few areas as dry.

The working of the first ministries showed defects which inhered right till the end, and indeed persisted even after independence. The poor financial resources, the lack of cohesion between ministers, undue interference with the functions of the bureaucracy, attention to trivial details rather than to broad policy, were some of the pitfalls. Yet one can't agree with the observation of a chronicler of the times 'I cannot say that the perview of *swaraj* gave me a thrill.'[41] It was certainly thrilling to find Indians managing, however badly, their affairs themselves for the first time. For as the *Gita* says:

> 'One's own duty in its imperfection
> is better than someone else's duty well-performed.'[42]

The Congress Split

The class that was most disappointed with the performance of the Congress ministries was probably that of the peasants. Gandhi had been devoting most of his time among them, popularising *khadi*, fighting for the untouchables and giving them hopes of swift betterment. The campaigners in the Congress during the elections of 1936 put the peasants first. Yet after a spell of Congress rule their miseries remained. There were doubtless some reforms but these made almost no impact. Rents remained high. There was no relief in debts, and the cultivator remained more than ever at the mercy of the money-lender. In their anxiety to protect the cultivator from extortion,

41 Durga Das, *India from Curzon to Nehru & After*, Collins 1969, p. 185.
42 *Bhagavad Gita*, III (Translation Kees W. Bolle).

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the rate chargeable by the *sahukar* as interest was fixed so low (6¼ per cent in Madras and 9 in Bihar) that they would not advance loans at all. The Congress ministries failed to provide any alternative source of borrowing such as co-operative credit for productive agricultural purposes. The frustration of the peasants led to agrarian riots in Bihar and UP, where their condition was the worst. There were numerous agitations all over in the Congress governed provinces. Huge processions went about, the disgruntled farmers carrying red flags with the hammer and sickle on them; for what the Congress failed to do for them, the Communists promised.

The Congress organisation itself could not long remain unaffected. Socialism had gradually infiltrated into it, and the younger element had no longer any faith in the stagnant Gandhian creed of non-violence. The unanimous election of Subhas Bose, leader of the radical party, as president of the Congress in the Haripura (Gujarat) session on 19 February 1938 was a pointer in this direction. The gulf between the two wings of the Congress increased towards the year end. The Gandhi-Nehru group was for co-operation with Britain. Bose believed that 'Britain's adversity was India's opportunity.' He was vehemently anti-British, and was not averse to aligning himself with England's enemies. In the Tripuri Congress session Bose defeated Pattabhi Sitaramayya by 95 votes and became President. Gandhi dubbed Pattabhi's defeat as 'more mine than his.' This created a pungent situation which was heightened all the more by Bose declaring that six months's notice should be given to Britain and thereafter civil disobedience again started. Most Congressmen, having tasted the fruits of office, were not prepared for such an extreme step, and rejoined the Gandhi group. The Tripuri session expressed its faith in 'a constituent assembly elected by the people on the basis of adult franchise without any interference by a foreign authority.' It expressed its disapproval of the British foreign policy of 'aiding the fascist powers and helping in the destruction of democratic countries.' A proposal to refer these resolutions to the All India Congress Committee created such an uproar that the session had to be adjourned for the next day. Visitors were denied admission, and the delegates carried on the

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discussions after the resolution was withdrawn. Gandhi had triumphed but it was a defeat of the democratic process, and of all those ideals of freedom of expression for which the Congress stood. Bose resigned in disgust, and gave place to Rajendra Prasad. He proceeded to organise a new party known as the Forward Bloc. To this flocked all the left wing Congressites. Bose's dissident wing did not approve of some of the resolutions of the Congress, such as prohibiting the All India Congress Committee from interfering with the discretion of the ministry in administrative matters and avoiding public discussion of such differences. The left wing condemned these resolutions in public meetings. The Congress president asked Bose for an explanation. Bose said that it would be strange if one had the right of freedom of speech against the British government but not against the Congress in its subordinate organisation. 'May I ask you in all seriousness' he said, 'if democratic rights are to be exercised only outside the Congress and not inside it?'[43] The Working Committee of the Congress considered Bose's explanation unsatisfactory, and disqualified him from holding the office of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and from being a member of any elective Congress Committee, for a period of three years.

The Second World War and Congress Revolt

1. *The Course of the War*

Towards the end of 1936 Italy and Germany allied with Japan to form the Axis, resulting in a counter alliance between Britain, France and Poland, after Hitler had started the offensive by occupying Austria. The war became a global conflict drawing in Russia and the US among others. After having overrun most of Europe, Hitler proceeded to bombard and blocade Britain and later to invade Russia. But both these operations were unsuccessful. The arena of the conflict shifted

43 *The History and Culture of the Indian People* (ed.) R.C. Majumdar, Bhavan, 1969, Vol. XI p. 572 *op. cit.* (History of the Congress, II, pp. 116-7).

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to the Mediterranean region and to Africa. In a devastating aerial attack Japanese planes pounded Pear Harbour in the Hawaii. Thereafter the war came closer to India. Driving the British and Australian troops down Malaya, the Japanese forced them to fall back on Rangoon. When they pressed on, the British evacuated Rangoon and left it to its fate. Indians living in the Burmese capital fled to India suffering great hardships, many dying on the way. Encouraged by these triumphs, Japan began to aspire for an Indian conquest. There was fighting in the Indian ocean and in the Bay of Bengal. Japanese planes bombed India on 6 April 1942, and followed up with another raid on 20 December. It was India's first direct experience of a modern war, and there was great panic.

The Allied Forces made a quick recovery, and American naval superiority was restored in the Pacific. The Axis powers were ousted from Africa and a German advance towards Suez was checked by General Montgomery, who pursued the Germans along the shores of Libya. The Russians launched an offensive and captured Belgrade, Lithuania and Latvia. The surrender of Itlay and later of Germany on 7 May 1945, was the end of Axis ambitions. But the Japanese still remained in the field, and were planning an invasion of India from their base in Burma. They were joined by Subhas Chandra Bose and his Indian National Army (the INA). Bose was detained under the Defence of India Rules on the outbreak of the war. Early in 1941 he managed to escape despite tight security, and fled to Berlin where he organised the Indian POW's captured by the Germans. Later he established the provisional government of Azad Hind and built up the INA to wrest freedom for India with the help of the Japanese. The combined forces of Japan and the INA fell back on Mandalay, then on to Rangoon, and finally retreated to Bangkok. There were large scale desertions. The Japanese fortunes also dwindled, and the Allied Forces captured Nyitkyina, Bhamo, Mandalay and finally Rangoon. Beset with their own difficulties the Japanese had no thought for Indian liberation. Bose's shattered army was a liability for them rather than a help. The INA hero was tricked into boarding a Japanese plane, alone, and that

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was end of him. A Japanese naval officer announced 'His Excellency Subhash Chandra Bose is dead.'

To turn back to the war; having beaten off the Japanese on all fronts, the Allied forces concentrated on destroying Japan. On 6 August 1945 a US bomber dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, killing and maiming 160,000 out of its 245,000 people, and destroying three-fifths of the town. Russia invaded Manchuria, and only three days after the first bomb, a second one made Nagasaki its target, creating again the same deadly destruction. The Japanese surrendered on 10 August, and the war was at an end.

2. *How the Political Parties took it*

The reactions of the Indian political parties to the war were strikingly different, and, their bargaining power having increased, they expressed their views more forcefully. The Congress leaders did not seem to know their own minds. Internal dissension was one reason for this, and the changing fortunes of the war another. In the beginning it seemed that Britain itself would be overrun by the Axis powers. In fact after the French collapse, the British government, fearing a complete breakdown of communications in England, transferred by the India and Burma Act some of the powers of the secretary of state to the governor general. Whatever the reason, the comments of Congress leaders were sometimes strangely inconsistent. In his presidential address at the Congress session at Lucknow in April 1936 Jawaharlal Nehru said 'Every war waged by imperialist powers will be an imperialist war whatever the excuses put forward; therefore we must keep out of it.' Yet on 8 September, after his return from China, not wishing 'to take advantage of Britain's difficulties,' he said 'I should like India to play her full part and throw all her resources in the struggle.' Narrating his interview with Lord Linlithgow regarding India's participation in the war, Gandhi wrote 'I am not just now thinking of India's deliverance. It will come, but what will it be worth if England and France fall... .' Gandhi's view, however, for once was not shared by the Congress. Even before the outbreak of the war it had made it

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clear that 'India cannot fight for freedom unless she herself is free.' On 15 September 1939 the Working Committee adopted a resolution that it took the gravest view of the viceroy's proclamation of war without India's consent. 'The issue of peace and war' the resolution said 'must be decided by the people of India and they could not allow their resources 'to be exploited for imperialist ends.' The All India Congress Committee not only endorsed this view, but going a step further, asked that India be declared an independent nation. The demand for complete independence was reiterated in the Congress session held at Ramgarh in March 1940 under the presidentship of Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, and then again by the Congress Working Committee at Bardoli which met on 25 December 1941.

The Muslim League promised to support the British in the war effort provided that, recognising it as the only body representing the Muslims, they promised to consult them before finally deciding upon any constitution for India.

The princes were solidly behind the government. The Hindu Mahasabha and the National Liberal Federation promised the government unconditional support.

3. *British Attitude and Efforts*

Indian support in the war would make a lot of difference in the resources Britain could command, so the viceroy soon began to woo prominent Indians. After talking to Gandhi, Nehru and Jinnah among others, he proclaimed that dominion status was the goal of British policy, and the Act of 1935 would be modified after the war in the light of Indian opinion, but with due regard to the interests of the minorities. In order to do this he proposed to form a consultative group under his presidentship consisting of representatives of the Indian princes of all the major political parties.

There was disappointment in Congress circles, and the High Command directed all Congress ministries to resign. The Muslim League was not sure what it should make out of the statement, and asked for further discussion and clarification. While welcoming the viceroy's assurance of consulting the

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minorities, the League wanted the Act of 1935 compeletely replaced by a more progressive constitutional measure. The secretary of state in a desperate attempt to placate the parties offered to take more Indians on the executive council of the governer general. But it did not work. The viceroy, in a way glad to get rid of the Congress ministries, turned more and more to the League. This made Jinnah's position strong, and Gandhi's ill-timed utterance, one of the rare anti-Muslim League ones, gave him even more strength. 'The Muslim League' he said 'is frankly communal and wants to divide India into two parts... . Thus for the present purpose there are only two parties—the Congress and those who side with the Congress, and the parties which do not. Between the two there is no meeting ground without the one or the other surrendering its purpose'.[44] This meant that Muslims must surrender to the Congress if they wanted to share the independence cake. Even the moderate nationalist Muslims in the League like Sikandar Hyat Khan found Gandhi's bitter pill difficult to swallow. The Working Committee of the Muslim League which met in June 1940 unanimously supported Jinnah, who emerged their sole leader. In his presidential speech Jinnah said that Hindus and Muslims represented different and distinct social orders and could not therefore evolve a common nationality. It was a confession of what had always lingered deep down in him. If Gandhi meant that the cake of freedom could be tasted by Muslims only on condition that they joined the Congress, the Muslims began to think, 'why not cut the cake up, and have our own slice.'

Meanwhile Hitler's victories in Europe had been making England panicky, and the aerial offensive he launched against her on 8 August 1940, coincided with a hurried package deal presented by Linlithgow, which became known as the August Offer. This envisaged the enlargement of the viceroy's council, the establishment of a war council, an assurance to the minorities that no constitutional reform would be made in which they had not been consulted, and the setting up of a representative

44 Coupland II, p. 242. Quoted in Bhavan's *The History and Culture of the Indian People* (ed.) R.C. Majumdar, 1969, Vol. XI, p. 629.

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Indian body after the war to frame the new constitution. The solution was meant to satisfy all parties, but it satisfied none. The Congress felt that minorities would take advantage of the assurance clause to block all worthwhile reform. The Muslim League resented the setting up of a 'representative' Indian body. Such a body, they suspected, would have a Hindu majority, which would never concede their demand for a separate nation. The Congress expressed its disapproval of the August Offer in strong terms. Gandhi said it 'widened the gulf'.[45] Jawaharlal, that the concept of dominion status 'was dead as a doornail.'[46] The Muslim League was less belligerent. While welcoming the minority consultation clause, they made it quite clear that the only real solution of the problem was 'the partition of India.'[47]

The Congress decided to demonstrate its opposition by a fresh dose of civil disobedience. But the attempt was half-hearted, and the Congress leaders themselves were not clear in their minds. Nehru said, 'launching a civil disobedience campaign at a time when Britain is engaged in a life and death struggle would be an act derogatory to India's honour.'[48] Gandhi was of the same view. 'We do not seek our independence' he said 'out of Britain's ruin. That is not the way of non-violence.' Instead of an enmasse movement, volunteers offered satyagraha in groups. The campaign neither evoked any wide enthusiasm, nor could embarrass the government. The protesting groups were promptly arrested, tried and convicted.

Negotiations on the August Offer continued for several months, and the new governor general's council was formed on 22 July 1941. Eight out of the thirteen members were Indian, but they were all yes-men. The war council had merely advisory functions. Whatever little hope remained in Indian minds of the sincerity of British intentions, was shattered by the Atlantic

45 Coupland II, p. 245. Quoted in Bhavan's *The History and Culture of the Indian People* (ed.) R.C. Majumdar, 1969, Vol. X1, p. 631.

46 *Ibid.*

47 Indian Annual Register, 1940 11 pp. 243-5.

48 Bhavan's, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, 1969, Vol. XI p. 632 *op. cit.*

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Charter by which Britain and the US jointly declared their war policy. Among other things, the Charter declared that Britain and US 'respect the rights of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.' The Charter issued in 1941—the year of the African invasion, the German attack on Russia, and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour—might well have been taken by the nations whom it was meant to placate as the will and testament of a dying person, for Allied defeats in the early part of the war had convinced them that the days of the British empire were numbered. For India, at least, the 'will' had a disheartening codicil, for Winston Churchill, the British prime minister, hastened to add that the Charter did not apply to India, which was 'quite a separate problem.'

Japan's entry into the war brought it close to the Indian frontier. The fall of Rangoon made Churchill anxious, and he was prevailed upon by Roosevelt, the American President, to find a solution to the Indian problem. Churchill sent Sir Stafford Cripps, a socialist member of the British war cabinet, for this purpose.

The Cripps Proposals

Sir Stafford Cripps arrived at Karachi on 7 December 1942 and from there proceeded to Calcutta, Allahabad, Lahore, Baroda, Hyderabad, Bombay and Wardha, holding discussions with various officials, political leaders and journalists.

The proposals envisaged 'the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a dominion, associated with the United Kingdom and the other dominions by a common allegiance to the Crown, but equal to them in every respect, n no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic or external affairs.' In order to achieve this object the scheme was that immediately after the war a body elected by the members of the provincial legislative assemblies and the representatives of the Indian states, by a system of proportional representation, would take up the task of framing a new constitution of India. The

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provinces and the rulers of the states would be given the choice to stay out of the framework of this constitution altogether or to accede afterwards. In that case if the non-acceding provinces so desired they would be given a new constitution and the same full status in the Indian Union as the provinces that joined.

There would be a new treaty between the British government and the states and provinces, covering matters arising from the transfer of power and providing for the protection of racial and religious minorities. The Indian Union would be free in the future to decide its relationship with other member states of the British Commonwealth.

Till the new constitution was not framed the British government would control the defence of India 'as part of their war effort, but the task of organising to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the co-operation of the peoples of India.'[49]

The proposals, following on the heels of Churchill's declaration that the Atlantic Charter did not apply to India, were looked upon with suspicion.[50] Surely the prime minister who in 1941 believed that India was not worthy of the boon of dominion status would not hasten to give it the very next year. Besides Churchill condemned that India Act of 1935 in a BBC broadcast as a monstrous monument of sham built by the pygmies. [51] If that was so, might not the proposals now offered be a bigger sham? The Indian people could not be blamed, therefore, if they chose in this case to look at the gift horse of the Cripps proposals carefully in the mouth. Nehru, at whose house (Anand Bhawan), Cripps stayed in Allahabad, thought the scheme had some desirable, feature, but also 'fatal defects.' He wanted adult franchise, objected to the term 'dominion status', which by now appeared to be delusive

49 C.H. Philip and others, *The Evolution of India and Pakistan*, Selected Documents 1958-1947, Oxford, 1962, p. 372.

50 ibid., p. 373.

51 R.J. Moore, *Churchill, Cripps and India, 1939-45*, Oxford, 1979, p. 1, *op. cit.*

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conwords, and thought the clause about minority rights was unnecessary, because in any scheme of constitutional reform they would be protected any way. One view (not Gandhi's, as some writers seem to think) was that the proposals were a 'post-dated cheque on a crashing bank.' Indeed they had come at a time of crisis in the war when Rangoon had fallen, and one could not at that time imagine the turn of luck, which later came, to the Allies. The Muslims, on whom the British pinned their hope most of all, thought the proposals did not go the whole way to positive partition of India, which was their goal. In a insidious way of course partition was hinted at, though it was not all that clear. Any province could keep out of the Indian Union, and yet claim the reward of dominion status. Such non-acceding states would form a separate nucleus, having the same rights and privileges. The proposals contained the germs of partition. But by this time the Muslim League, apprehensive of the Congress's cry of independence only, had raised the counter cry of, partition and nothing but partition. Jinnah had made this clear in his statement on the Lahore resolution. 'I may explain that the Mussalmans' he said, 'wherever they are in a minority, cannot improve their position under a united India or under one central government. Whatever happens they would remain a minority....On the other hand they can, by their attitude of obstruction bring the Muslim homeland...'[52] Having gone so far, nothing short of a 'homeland for the Muslims' could satisfy the League.

When Cripps met Jinnah in Bombay, the Muslim leader said that the introduction of unconditional western democracy in India would mean majority rule. In the Congress ministries, all but Congressmen had been excluded from office. His reaction was 'that Congress should accept the Muslim League as the negotiator on behalf of the Muslims; that the Muslims should be represented in the provincial governments and that no bill should be proceeded with if two-thirds of the Muslim

52 Jamil-ud-Din Ahmad, *Some Recent Writings and Speeches of Mr Jinnah*, Lahore, 1946, pp. 182-83.

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members of the legislature objected to it on communal grounds,'[53]

The Hindu Mahasabha was opposed to any scheme which might lead to the partitioning of India in any way. They also considered the proposed mode of election on communal basis as anti-national and undemocratic. So they showed no inclination for the Cripps proposals. The Sikhs resented the choice given to provinces in the matter of accession. They feared this might leave the Punjab out of the Union. The depressed classes, the Anglo-Indians and the Indian Christians felt that the proposals did not guarantee them adequate safe-guards. Thus all parties and all shades of Indian opinion remained unenthusiastic about the Cripps offer.

Another major defect was that while rulers of Indian states were given the option to adhere to the new constitution, the ninety million people under them in the states were given no voice. There was disagreement also over the clause of the proposal providing for the arrangement during the interim period, and the powers and functions of the Indian members on the governor general's council, particularly in regard to defence. The relevant para in the proposal was :

> 'The defence department shall be placed in the charge of a representative Indian member, but certain functions relating to the conduct of the war will be exercised, until the new constitution comes into operation, by the commander-in-chief who will be in control of the war activities of the armed forces of India, and who will be a member of the executive council for that purpose.'[54]

On the request of the Congress the words 'until the new constitution comes into operation' were omitted. But at the same time Lord Wavell, prevailed on Cripps to exclude the words 'for that purpose.' With these omissions the purport was that

53 R.J. Moore, *Churchill, Cripps and India*, 1939-1945, Oxford, 1979, p. 13, *op. cit.*

54 Linlithgow to Amery, 9 April, 1942. Quoted in R.J. Moore, *Churchill, Cripps and Indta, 1939-1945*, Oxford, 1979, p. 114.

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the functions transferred to the commander-in-chief would revert to the defence department immediately after the war. But the amendment suggested by Wavell meant that the commander-in-chief would sit in each and every meeting whether connected with war activities or not. The scope of operation of the council was also vague, and all that Cripps could say about it was that it was a matter to be discussed between Congressmen and the viceroy.

The real truth of the Cripps proposals was that the British prime minister wanted to convince the US president that he was offering the Indians dominion status and self-government, and they themselves did not want it. The US was a powerful ally and Churchill did not wish to displease her. Roosevelt was of the view that the giving of dominion status to India would secure her co-operation in the war, and that would be a valuable asset. That was why he sent Colonel Louis A. Johnson as his personal representative to New Delhi. Johnson kept the American president informed about the progress, and incidentally did much himself for the proposals. Cripp's told Coupland that 'if a settlement is achieved it will be largely Johnson's doing.'[55]

The proposals failed mainly because that was what they were meant to do. Churchill made out a scheme which he knew would hardly be acceptable to Indians, and he left no scope for negotiation. He made this clear to Cripps :

> 'You speak of carrying on negotiations. It was certainly agreed between us all that there were not be negotiations...'[56]

Right in the beginning when Linlithgow had proposed dominion status, Churchill had exclaimed that England should not yield to the pressures of parties who were, after all, 'only exploiting the dangers with which Britain were faced.'[57] The

55 R.G. Coupland's Diary, India 1941-2, Rhodes House, Oxford, 6 April 1942.

56 Churchill to Cripps, 10 April, 1942. Quoted by R.J. Moore, *Churchill, Cripps, and India, 1939-1945*, Oxford 1979, p. 122.

57 Cabinet Conclusion, 56(39)8, 25 October, 1939.

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Congress was, as we have seen, initially hopeful, and Nehru had said that the Cripps scheme was 'broadly...on the right lines.' But soon it realised that the British wished to hedge around dominion status with so many reservations, that it lost its original significance altogether. The Congress rejection of the proposals, conveyed through Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's letter, bewailed this transformation :

> 'You had referred...to a national government and a cabinet consisting of ministers. These words have a certain significance and we had imagined that the new government would function with full powers as a cabinet with the viceory acting as constitutional head; but the new picture that you placed before us (yesterday) was really not very different from the old, the difference being one of degree not of kind. The new government could neither be called, except vaguely and inaccurately (national), nor could it function, as a national government. It would just be the viceroy and his executive council, with the viceroy having all his old powers'.[58]

It was not really the Congress which wrecked the Cripps proposals.[59] It was rather the viceroy, who honestly did not want any genuine responsible government for India, and Churchill who wished to give nothing and yet to stage the drama of giving for the benefit of an American audience. He had categorised the proposals as 'our great offer which has made so powerful an impression here and throughout the US.' Johnson soon discovered the fraud, and informed his boss in US about

58 Azad to Cripps, 10 April 1942. Quoted in R.J. Moore, *Churchill, Cripps and India*, 1939-1945, Oxford, 1979, p. 120.

59 The British view that Gandhi was responsible for the failure of the proposals is absurd. Gandhi left Delhi at an early stage of the negotiations and took no further part in them. The charge that he phoned from Sevagram asking Congress to reject the Cripps offer, was, as Gandhi himself said 'a tissue of lies.' When the apostle of truth, who did not hesitate to record even his innermost failings (which he need not have done), says that, there can be no reason on earth for disbelieving him.

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it. But he could do nothing more, for Churchill hurriedly pulled the string and dropped curtain before the play was over. Johnson reported to Roosevelt that the failure to reach an understanding was 'due to Churchill's intervention when a satisfactory solution seemed certain.'[60] His conclusion was that 'London wanted a Congress refusal.'[61] Having been briefed exhaustively by his lieutenant, Roosevelt was not taken in when Churchill cabled that the Congress had rejected Cripps's offer 'despite Britain's utmost efforts.' Roosevelt sent off a frantic message in reply :

> 'The general impression here is quite the contrary. The feeling is almost universally held that the deadlock has been caused by the unwillingness of the British government to concede to the Indians the right of self-government, notwithstanding the willingness of the Indians to entrust technical, military and naval defence control to the competent British authorities. American public opinion cannot understand why, if the British government is willing to permit the component parts of India to secede from the British empire after the war, it is not willing to permit them to enjoy what is tantamount to self-government during the war.'[62]

Churchill got the appeal on a Sunday and took that as an excuse for not putting it up before the cabinet. In fact he had no intention of doing so. Indeed it was amusing to find the hardened unemotional prime minister simulate a show of sentiment. 'Anything like a serious difference between you and me would break my heart' he wrote to Roosevelt.'[63] Secretly he expressed his inner feeling on Cripps's failure by dancing around the cabinet room![64] He need not have sought any excuses, however, for ten minutes before Roosevelt's appeal

60 Johnson to Roosevelt, 11 April 1942, Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 130.
61 Moore, p. 130.
62 R.J. Moore, *Churchill, Cripps and India, 1939-1945*, Oxford, 1979, p. 130, *op. cit.*, Roosevelt to Hopkins, for Churchill, 11 April 1942.
63 Churchill to Roosevelt, 12 April, *Foreign Relations to the United States*, Washington, 634-5.
64 Michael Edwardes, *The Last Years of British India*, Cassell, 1963, p. 79.

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came, Cripps had left India for good. Torn between his moody prime minister and the sphinx-like viceroy, he had done his best. Nehru called him 'the Devil's Advocate.' If it was so there was never an advocate who had more well earned his fees.

And so it was curtains for the Cripps Comedy in three Acts.[65] With the hero homeward bound, Indian politics reverted to its disjointed, dissonant, key.

Quit India

Gandhi had left Delhi in disgust, convinced that the much flaunted Cripps mission was another British attempt to harness the horse of freedom to the cart of false promises. He had objected to the autocratic princely states taking the shelter of British protection, as they might not join the proposed National Union. The proposal, felt Gandhi, meant virtually inviting the Muslims to create Pakistan. Less than three months after Cripps had left India, George VI observed to Churchill in a luncheon :

> 'Cripps, the Press and US public opinion have all contributed to make their minds up that our rule in India is wrong, and has always been wrong for India. I disagree and have always said India has got to be governed, and this will have to be our policy.'[66]

It was clear that Britain would not easily give up India, 'the gem of the British empire.' Gandhi had gone into hibernation, being no more an active member of the Congress, but his mind was busy. He had co-operated with the British in the crisis created by the world war. He had so long believed in the words of Plato, 'force against his native land he should not use in order to bring about a change of constitution, when it is not possible for the best constitution to be introduced without driving men into exile or putting them to death; he should keep quiet and offer up prayers for his own welfare and for that of

65 The offer was modified thrice before rejection.
66 John W. Wheeler—Bennett, *King George VI—His Life and Reign.*

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his country.'[67] But he had got tired of waiting for the miracle of freedom to happen. 'I waited and waited' he wrote 'until the country should develop the non-violent strength necessary to throw off the foreign yoke. But my attitude has now undergone a change. I feel that I cannot afford to wait. If I continue to wait I might have to wait till doomsday.' He now wished to revive mass non-violent non co-operation which had remained dormant since 1934, giving this the name 'Quit India'; meaning thereby that the British should be prevailed upon to leave India, and draw back the tentacles of their rule. He believed seriously that such a movement would save India from a Japanese invasion. The Japanese were interested in the invasion not because they coveted India but because they were at war with England, and India was part of the British empire. If the British agreed to leave India, he told Azad, 'we could then tell the Japanese that they should not advance any further.' If they advance despite this 'we must oppose Japan with all our might.'

The 'Japanese' angle was strange, for it was hardly likely that the Japs would call off an invasion merely because the British withdrew from India. They encouraged the Indian struggle only in the hope it would weaken England, and through them the Allies. In fact if they ever found themselves powerful enough, with the British gone, they would most likely take advantage of Indian disunity, to take their place as rulers. Perhaps Gandhi guessed as much, for he agreed to 'stationing of the armed forces of the Allies in India, should they so desire in order to ward off and resist Japanese or other aggression, and to protect and help China.'[68]

Another strange concept of Gandhi was that the launching of the Quit India movement would make the British come to terms with the Congress in view of the fact that Japanese forces had reached the Indian frontier. What was more fantastic was his belief that the British government, for fear of the Japanese, would not take any drastic steps to suppress the movement.

67 Plato, *Seventh Letter.*

68 Congress Demands for British Withdrawl, 1942, Statement on the Congress Party's Responsibility for Disturbances in 1942-3.

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Both these hopes were belied, and in fact no one apart from Gandhi ever expected either of these things to happen.

Then there was the question of the minorties, which the British always referred to as the stumbling-block in any move for conferring dominion status. If their rule was not to last, they couldn't have cared less who would be the successors. Yet they clung on to the minority question because it enabled them to sow division. Partition was indeed by now no longer as the mist which Gandhi believed 'will vanish before the morning sun of liberty', as soon as the British withdrew from India.'[69] It was rather a dark cloud which would burst into rain any moment. It was difficult to envisage that the Gordion knot of the minorities could so easily be untied as Gandhi thought when he said 'The fiction of majority and minority will vanish like the mist before the morning sun of liberty. Truth to tell, there will be neither majority nor minority in the absence of paralysing British arms. The millions of India would then be an undefined but one mass of humanity.'[70] It did not turn out like that, when eventually British arms were withdrawn. There was no 'one mass of humanity.' It was a river of blood, with communal frenzy at its worst. C. Rajagopalchari had other thoughts on the issue. Along with some of his supporters, he recommended the acceptance of Pakistan as the basis of settlement between the Congress and the League. When his resolution was rejected by the All India Congress Committee, he resigned from the working committee and later from the Congress, too. But only seven of his followers sided with him, vindicating the supreme leadership of Gandhi.

One can't blame Gandhi for the instrument he chose for the Quit India moment. If his appeal to the British to go home failed, the Congress would then 'be reluctantly compelled to utilise all the non-violent strength it might have gathered since 1920 when it adopted non-violence as part of its policy for the vindication of the political rights and liberty.' He admitted

69 Mahatma Gandhi and British Withdrawal from India, 26 April 1924, C.H. Philip and others, *The Evolution of India and Pakistan, 1858 to 1947*, Oxford, 1962, p. 340.

70 ibid.

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that 'in modern parlance, leaving India in God's hands meant anarchy, and that anarchy may lead to internecine warfare for a time or to unrestrained dacoities. From these a true India will rise in place of the false one we see'[71]. It might seem strange that Gandhi equated the freedom struggle with the anarchy. But really there was nothing strange in it. Anarchy is often the stepping ground for freedom, as Lincoln says :

> 'Plainly the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy. A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks, and limitations, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people. Whoever rejects it does, of necessary fly to anarchy...'[72]

What Gandhi failed to forsee was a plan and a purpose for his movement. His notion of how the British would be driven out of India was vague. In his memoirs Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad says : 'When I pressed him to tell us what exactly would be the programme of resistance, he had no clear idea.' Where in lone instances Quit India managed to achieve what Gandhi had in mind, as in Ballia (UP) where the people had seized power; no one knew what to do next.

British action to crush the movement was prompt and ruthless. Even as the Congressmen who had resolved on Quit India slept at their homes after a late night strenuous session, instructions for the arrest of the ring-leaders were on the way. Before dawn they were behind the bars. The AICC and all the provincial committees (barring those in the NWFP) were declared unlawful organisations. Congress funds were confiscated and their headquarter office at Allahabad seized and locked up. Rigorous measures were taken against the press, and a number of newspapers including Gandhi's *Harijan*

71 *The History and Culture of Indian People*, (ed.) R.C. Majumdar, Bhavan, 1969, Vol. XI, *op. cit.*, Coupland II, p. 290.

72 Lincoln, *First Inaugural Address.*

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ceased publication. The government doubtless expected that these measures would immediately terminate the agitation. But they were mistaken. The Congress hold on the people was immense and even the disorganised leaderless movement took about two months to completely fade out. Years of foreign rule with all the humiliation and injustice involved in it, and British attempts to create conditions in which popular government was becoming a will-o'-the-wisp, had filled most people with the spirit of defiance. Liberty had become for them a thing of supreme value, and the only prize worthy of achievement. So when Gandhi mentioned 'the glow of freedom' which would emancipate India, all India responded. Gandhi's call was 'do or die'. It was not much different from what a US statesman had said almost half a century ago. 'Give me liberty' he had exclaimed, 'or give me death.'[73] Although few were prepared for this extreme sacrifice, and many were caught in the whirlwind by sheer chance, the enthusiasm for it was universal. It might not be quite correct to say that the movement 'was mostly confined to students, peasants and the lower middle class', and that 'the intellectual or the higher middle class had not taken any active part, evidently because they were gradually losing faith in the specific remedy offered by Gandhi'[74]. The intellectual class may not have indulged in violence, but they were solidly behind Gandhi and the movement. Looking back, the author recollects that even senior university professors would secretly be pleased if their students boycotted classes in protest, Indeed, one of the professors wrote out on the blackboard the words of Shakespeare's famous sonnet:

> 'They that have power to hurt and will do none,
> That do not do the thing they most do show
> Who, moving others, are themselves as stone
> Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow;

73 Herbert Patrick, Speech in Virgina Convention, 23 May 1775.

74 *The History and Culture of the Indian People.* Bhavan, 1969, vol. XI, pp. 658-9.

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They rightly do inherit Heaven's graces;
And husband nature's riches from expense;
They are the lords and owners of their faces,
Others but stewards of their excellence.'

'Who do you think that refers to?' our professor asked us. When we were silent, he said with unmistakable pride 'Mahatma Gandhi, of course,' Then he wrote out the concluding part:

'For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds:
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.'

'That' he explained, 'refers to our English administrators.' The unprovoked *lathi* charges and firings on peaceful demonstrators, police beatings and indignities, not sparing women, looting arson and collective fines on many who in fact had taken no part in movement at all, incensed people inwardly and sometimes led them to violence. It is needless to relate all the blood-curdling incidents of horror. An inventory has been made by many who have vividly described the Quit India movement. There were air raids on many towns. 538 firings (as stated in the official report), more than a hundred thousand arrests and detentions, and (according to Nehru), more than 10,000 deaths. As Churchill told the House of Commons, the disturbances 'were crushed with all the weight of the government.' The number of white soldiers, he said, who went out to suppress them were 'larger than at any time in the British connection.'[75] There was violence on the other side too, for it always comes as a chain reaction. Communications were disrupted, government property destroyed, bombs exploded and officials murdered. According to the 1942 resolution the alternative, in case the British did not agree to leave India was 'to utilize all the non-violent strength it (the Congress) might have gathered since 1920 when it adopted non-violence as part of its policy for the vindication of political

75 *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bhavan, 1969, Vol. XI, p. 659, *op. cit.*

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rights and liberty.'[76] It was also made clear that 'such a wide-spread struggle would inevitably be under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.'[77] Two questions arise about these utterances, in the context of the events which actually took place. Firstly, were the acts of violence which followed, the outcome of rage against repression, or were they purposely and deliberately planned? Secondly, what was the extent of Gandhi's responsibility for them, seeing that the movement was under his leadership? The Congressmen were inclined to think that the outbreak was caused by public resentment against the arrest of prominent leaders like Gandhi, Azad and others, and due to the rage of the people at *lathi*-charges and firings on peaceful processions. Gandhi wrote to Linlithgow that it was 'leonine violence which goaded people to acts of violence'. Horace Alexander, the British journalist, says in the same vein, 'It was the repression let loose by the police that goaded to violent fury crowds that have intended to act quite peacefully.' On the other hand the large scale disruption of communications and sabotage, point to organised violence. It seems that both things happened but one after the other. In the beginning violence was the consequence of the people's rage against the unwarranted use of force and that too out of all proportion to the necessity. As time passed, however, the revolutionary wing of the Congress took charge of the movement. Men like Jayaprakash Narayan, Dr Ram Manohar Lohia, Sardar Nityanand Singh and others, rejected the Gandhian creed of non-violence. Terrorist activities increased, and there were acts of organised sabotage all over India. As regards the second question, Gandhi never envisaged that the movement would assume the ugly shape it did. Being truthful to the core, when he opted for non-violence, he meant it. He did say that the immediate result of British withdrawal could cause a spell of anarchy with all its ills. But anarchy means only absence of government control, and this would be a natural consequence if the British suddenly withdrew.

76 Congress Demands for Britlsh Withdrawal 1842. Statement on the Congress party's Responsibility for Disturbances in 1942-3.
77 ibid.

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Gandhi hoped the void would soon be filled by an alternative responsible government. He could certainly not have envisaged all the unpleasantness which Quit India brought in its trail much less condone it. As news of one outrage after another trickled to him in prison it must have saddened him. But as he himself wrote to Sir Reginald Maxwell: 'The resolution of 8th August did not contain any threat, open or veiled. It prescribed the limitations under which the negotiations could cbe arried on and its sanction was free of all force, i.e. violence.'[78] Gandhi was certainly not resposible for any of acts of violence which occured, and to put any blame on him for them is, as Jayaprakash Narayan rightly says, 'a piece of perjury.'

The Quit India movement lasted less than two months. Before the end of September 1942 it had petered out, though it was continued in an insidious manner till the beginning of 1943. Apart from being ill-planned, it was badly executed, hardly having any direction except the people's own whims and inclinations. There was no definite objective or positive programme. The fund raising campaign was poorly organised. The Communists, and their leaders like M.N. Roy, assisted by funds provided by the government, worked against the movement and kept the labourers away from it, with the results that most factories were unaffected. Nevertheless Quit India revived the flagging spirit of freedom and gave the national struggle a fresh lease. The failure was not so significant as the heroic endeavour. There was valour and martyrdom. In Allahabad, for example, when firing was commenced on a procession of peaceful students all of them lay on the ground to escape the flying bullets. One boy, however, stood up. 'Shoot him' the police officer barked out 'He is alone.' Seeing this, another student got up and waving his hand shouted, 'No, he is not alone !' Those were his last words before the police bullet got him. No freedom struggle can ever remain peaceful, and one could not except that of 1942 to be completely non-violent. But that dose not take away its glory, for as one writer says :

78 *Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government*, 1942-4; Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1945, p. 85.

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'Oh Freedom, thou art not as poets dream
A fair young girl with light and delicate limbs
And wavy tresses. A bearded man
Armed to the teeth art thou.
One mailed hand
Grasps the broad shield and one the sword; thy brow
Glorious in beauty though it be, is scarred
With tokens of old wars.'[79]

The Muslim Viewpoint

An impression persisted in British minds that Muslims had taken a prominent part in the revolt of 1857.[80] Immediately afterwads there were desperate attempts by leading Muslims to cajole them, the refrain of which was Muslim-British *bhai bhai.* Sir Syed Ahmed, the prominent Muslim leader said 'if in Hindustan there was one class of people above another, who from the principles of their religion, from habits and associations, and from kindred disposition, were fast bound with Christians, in their dread hour of trial and danger, in the bonds of amity and friendship, those people were the Mohammedans, and they alone'.[81] Muslims, he said, should espouse the cause of Christians 'seeing that they have—like ourselves,—been favoured with a revelation from heaven, and believe in the Prophets, and hold sacred the word of God in his holy book, which is also an object of faith with us. It was therefore needful and proper that where the blood of Christians was spilt, there should also have mingled with it that of Mohammedans.'[82]

Along with the desire to come close to the British, the Muslims reaction to the partition of Bengal was gradually

79 William Cullen Bryant.
80 See author's *A History of Indian Civilization*, vol. 3 part 1. (Company to Curzon), Ess Ess Publishers, New Delhi, 1981, Lord Canning, The Indian Revolt, *O Ye Mnslims.*
81 Syed Ahmed Khan on the Muslims and the Mutiny, 1860, *Loyal Mohammedans of India*, 1860, quoted in C.H. Philips, *Select Documents*, Oxford, 1962, p. 174.
82 ibid, p. 174-5.

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coming to the surface. Initially the Muslims of East Bengal were as much against the ill-advised partition as the Hindus. A large number of them took part in the *swadeshi* movement and joined *bande mataram* processions. Gradually, however, this attitude changed, and in a meeting of the Muslims held at Dacca on December 30, 1906 a resolution was passed holding the partition to be beneficial to the Muslims. In 1908 the Central Committe of the Muslim League observed that partition had brought salvation to the Musalmans of East Bengal. The League session held the same year at Amritsar endorsed this view and expressed vehement opposition to 'mischievous attempts to unsettle this settled fact.' Hindus, on the contrary, opposed the partition, their 'hatred for the Muslims who supported the measure being no less fierce than for the British who planned and carried it out.'[83] The Bengal partition was annulled in 1911, but not after it had unnecessarily caused a lot of bitterness between Hindus and Muslims.

The rift created by the Bengal partition widened and soon spread over the domain of constitutional reforms. As early as 1883 Sir Syed Ahmed had opposed representation by election in local bodies. This he averred 'would totally override the interests of the smaller community.'[84] Commenting on the Congress's demand that the people should elect a section of the viceroy's council Sir Syed said 'it is certain that the Hindu members will have four times as many (votes) because their population is four times as numerous...It would be like a game of dice, in which one man had four dice and the other only one.'[85] Sir Syed did not wish for a moment that the English would leave India. His argument was that if they did there would be civil war between Hindus and Muslims, and some foreign power much worse than England would make an Indian conquest. 'It is, therefore, necessary' he concluded, 'that for the peace of India and for the progress of everything in India the English government should remain for many years—

83 Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims*, Allen and Unwin. 1967, p. 433.
84 Proceedings of the Indian Legislative Council, vol. 22, 1833.
85 C.H. Philips, *Select Documents*, Oxford, 1962, p. 188 Speech at Lucknow, 28 December, 1887.

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in fast for ever.'[86] The British were conquerors of India, and whoever heard, he said, of a 'conquered nation claiming it as a right that they should have representative government.'[87] Not only did Sir Syed wish the British Government to stay, he thought that a natural consequence of such a government was English officers. 'I ask you' he said, 'is it the duty of government or not to appoint European officers in its empire to stop conspiracies and rebellions ? Be just, and examine your hearts, and tell me if it is not a natural law that people should confide more in men of their own nation.'[88] Admiration for the British government, though not in such adulatory terms, was also the refrain of Congressmen in the beginning. In his presidential speech Dadhabhai Naoroji said on 27 December 1886 : 'It is under the civilising rule of the Queen and people of England that we meet here together, hindered by none, and are freely allowed to speak our minds without the least fear and without least hesitation. Such a thing is possible under British rule only.'[89] The Congress, Dadabhai said, was not a nursery for sedition and rebellion against the British government.[90] But while the Muslim point of view remained constant, indeed gathered strength with time, the Hindus began to break away. With the emergence of the extremists led by Tilak, sedition and rebellion, which Dadabhai thought would be scruplously avoided, came to the forefront. Even as early as 1900 the Congress gave one of the reasons of the misery of the Indian people to be 'the exclusion of the people of India from a due participation in the administration and all control over the finances of their own country.'[91] Another sharp difference between the League and the Congress was that while the former became more unified with time, the Congress broke up into many sections having different ideologies and lines of action.

The founding of the Muslim League on 30 Decmeber was a

86 ibid, p. 189, Speech at Meerut, 14 March 1888.
87 ibid.
88 ibid, p. 189.
89 C.J. Philips, *Select Documents*, Oxford, 1962, 139 (Report of the 2nd Indian National Congress, 1886).
90 ibid.
91 ibid, 153.

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legacy of the Bengal partition as well as Minto's support of the Muslims. Indeed no nation, much less the British, could long refrain from responding to such earnest protestations of loyalty. But the British are a cool and calculating people, and their support to the Muslims had a more vital objective, viz. 'to play the Hindus and the Muslims against each other with a show of regard for law and justice.'[92] The Muslim League had one of its aims as the protection and advancement of the political rights of the Indian Muslims. The dismemberment of the Turkish empire during the Great War of 1914 strained somewhat relations between the Muslims and the British, and consequently brought Hindus and Muslims close for a time. Mahatma Gandhi was chosen president of the khilafat conference held in the middle of 1919. Muslims sincerely joined Hindus in the protests against the Rowlatt Acts and in the non co-operation campaign. In the 1917 session of the Muslim Leauge a question was raised whether an Indian Muslim was first a Muslim or first an Indian. Islam, it was said, 'did not allow of a distinction between politics and religion, and it was believed that Indian Muslims would remain indifferent to political affairs unless it was demonstrated that Islam required them to show full and proper concern.'[93]

This decision meant that Muslim participation in the non-cooperation movement and *satyagraha* was improper. Even then as some Muslims had already taken part in it they might have continued to do so. Gandhi, abruptly called off his non-cooperation movement in February 1922 to the relief of the Muslims. Their conscience would no longer be disturbed by feeling that they were transgressing the principle enunciated in 1917. In the Muslim League conference of 1929 the Muslims demanded 33 per cent representation in the central legislature. Jinnah's draft resolution (which did not, however, go through) had many other conditions also, among them adequate representation of Muslims in the services. In the 1930 session of the League held at Allahabad, the president, Sir Mohammed Iqbal, brought up the demand for a North West Indian Muslim

92 M. Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims*, Allen & Unwin, 1967, p. 433.
93 ibid, 439.

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confederacy comprising of the frontier states of NWFP, Sind and Baluchistan. The North West Indian Muslims, he argued, 'will prove the best defenders of India against a foreign invasion, be that invasion one of ideas or bayonets.' He significantly remarked during the course of his address 'Communalism, in all its higher aspects, then, is indispensable to the formation of a harmonious whole in a country like India...The Muslim demand for the creation of a Muslim India is, therefore, perfectly justified.'[94]

After the end of the khilafat movement, Muslims ceased to take any interest in Gandhi's cause of *satyagraha*. Jinnah, who had so far co-operated, refused to join him now 'because his movement is not a movement for the complete independence India but for making the seventy millions of Indian Mussalmans dependent on the Hindu Mahasabha.'[95] The elections of 1935-36 and the consequent formation of ministries (Congress in 6 provinces and non-Congress in 4) led to this new rift. Jinnah charged the Congress with 'alienating the Mussalmans of India more and more by pursuing a policy which is exclusively Hindu.'[96] In those provinces in which they were in a majority, he said, 'they have by their words, deeds and programme shown more and more that the Mussalmans cannot expect any justice or fair-play at their hands.' Jinnah accused Hindus of wanting Hindustan for themselves, but curiously enough he singled out Gandhi, who was later to fast during the partition so that Muslims may not die, as being 'responsible for turning the Congress into an instrument for the revival of Hinduism.'[97]

At the same time Jinnah was putting forward the claim that the Muslim League represented every Muslim in India—a claim which the Congress was not prepared to concede. Part of the compaign carried out by the League against the Congress was that of accusing it of conspiring against the Muslims in various ways. The League council appointed a committee with the

94 ibid.

95 *The Times of India*, 24 April, 1930. Quoted in *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bhavan, 1969, vol. XI, p. 528.

96 C.H. Philips, *Select Documents*, Oxford, 1962, p. 347.

97 ibid, p. 351.

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Raja of Pirpur as chairman to draw up a list of such charges. Apart from citing cases of alleged persecution and injustice, the committee brought forward objections to the use of the tri-colour flag and the *bande mataram* song, the Wardha scheme of education, the popularisation of Hindi, and even the Hindu veneration of the cow. It resented the Congress attempt to make a mass contact of Muslims, and held the Congress responsible for communal riots. Although most of these allegations were frivolous, and others lacked proof, they were instrumental in inflaming Muslim minds, so much so that they even thought of taking direct action. Muslim quasi-military organisations were building up. There were Muslim League Volunteer Corps the Muslim National Guard and the Khakkars. Fortunately any direct clash was avoided.

After the outbreak of the second world war Congress governments resigned in the fall of 1939 as a protest against Lord Linlinthgow's poor response to the Indian demand of immediate dominion status. The Muslim League rejoiced at the event and celebrated it as a day of 'deliverance and thanksgiving.' A draft resolution was framed as the charter of deliverance which each unit of the Muslim League was asked to pass. The resolution said that 'the Congress ministry has failed to safeguard the rights and interests of the Mussalmans and other minorities and interests.' Specific charges were levied against the Congress ministries, viz. that they had flouted Muslim opinion, destroyed Muslim culture, interfered with the social and religious life of Muslims and trampled upon their economic and political rights. Hindus, mostly Congressmen, the resolutions said, had ill-treated Muslims and flouted their elementary rights of freedom. They had 'interfered with the legitimate and routine duties of district officers even in petty matters to the detriment of the Mussalmans',[98] and had given the impression that they were out to establish 'a Hindu raj'[99]

The Lahore session of March 1940 led to a further crystallisation of the partition idea. In his presidential address Jinnah

98 C.H. Philips and Others, *Select Documents*, Oxford, 1962, p. 352.
99 ibid.

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mentioned separate homelands for Hindus and Muslims. 'It is a dream' he said 'that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality.' It was futile, he argued, 'to yoke together two such diverse people as the Hindus and the Muslims, who had different epics, different heroes and different episodes.'[100]. The resolution of the Muslim League put the demand in clearer terms. 'No constitutional reform would be acceptable to the Muslims' it said, 'unless it was designed on the following basic principle, viz. that geographically continuous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute "independent states" in which the constituent units should be autonomous and sovereign.'[101]

The idea of a separate Muslim state for Muslims was accelerated by the emergence of the Hindu Mahasabha under the leadership of V. D. Savarkar. The party grew up as a reaction to the Muslim League, and was the answer to it. The Hindu Mahasabha conceived of all India as Hindustan, the land of the Hindus. Even though the Mahasabha advocated just treatment to the Muslims in such a state, the promise could hardly appeal to them. If there was anything the Muslims were suspicious of, it was a Hindu state, and no degree of assurance of equal treatment could lure them into one.

The Lahore resolution of the League was condemned by Gandhi in the *Harijans*, and the Hindu press generally. The unity of Hindus and Muslims had now completely broken up. There were no efforts for a compromise, or hope of one. The *Statesman* observed:

'The Congress says the whole of India must be one independent country. The princes say they will refuse to belong to this country in these circumstances and will fight for the independence of their states. Mr Jinnah and the Muslim League say that the Muslims will form completely independent

100 ibid. p. 354.
101 ibid, pp. 354-5.

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sovereign states with contiguous frontiers in the north and east.'[102]

Had the Indian leaders made an effort to understand and accommodate each other instead doggedly clinging on to their own concepts, they might have given a different turn to the events which were to follow. But it was not to be. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, a member of the viceroy's council wrote in despair :

> 'The recent pronouncement of the Mahatma that it is no use calling an all-parties conference, as other parties do not share the point of view of the Congress, has filled me with despair. Bluntly put, it is the very essence of totalitarianism, and it does not matter that his totalitarianism is different from other brands of totalitarianism in that it is based on non-violence. The result is the same. There is no toleration for difference of opinion.'[103]

This may not be quite fair on a verdict on Gandhi but it certainly depicts the mood of times. As was usually the case in critical moments of Indian History, difference triumphed over accord, mistrust over trust, religion over nationality.

The Emergence of Political Parties

(1) *The Muslim League*

After the formation of the Muslim League in 1906, the main demand of the Muslims was for separate electorates. In fact in the second session of the League held at Amritsar on 30 December 1909 it was urged that 'Mohammedans have a political status, having been rulers of the land immediately before the advent of the British rule in India, and as such they deserve somewhat larger representation than may appear warranted by

102 *The Statesman*, Q.E.D., 25 March 1940, *The Statesman*, An Anthology, compiled by N. Majumdar, 1975, p. 467.

103 Durga Das, *India from Curzon to Nehru & After*, Collins, 1969, p. 197.

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an arithmetical strength.'[104] The Congress reaction to Muslim aspirations was favourable. Gandhi said 'I honestly believe that Hindus should yield up to the Mohammadans what the latter desire, and that they should rejoice in so doing.'[105] Although the Muslims were appeased, a section of the Hindus were against this wooing, and gave strength to the Hindu Mahasabha.

The annulment of the Bengal partition ond British animosity towards Turkey in the Great War caused Muslim discontent, leading to a temporary reconciliation between the two communities. This led to the Lucknow Pact of 29 December 1916. The Muslim League and the Congress jointly accepted a scheme of reforms envisaging provincial legislative councils with a five term, 'elected directly by the people on as broad a franchise as possible,' with safeguards for minorities. The Muslims were to be elected on the councils through special electorates. The agreement was bound by a slender string because it was based more on annoyance with the English than accord with the Hindus, and clearly could not last long. The League remained separate and maintained that its object was still 'to protect and advance the political and other rights and interests of the Indian Mussalmans.' Besides Jinnah said that the Muslims were free to co-operate with either the British or the Hindus according as it suited their interests. Thus the germs of the two nation theory were already sown.

Early in 1920 Muslims started the khilafat movement in support of the caliph of Turkey, which received so much encouragement from Gandhi that he was elected the president of the All India Khilafat Conference which met in Delhi on 24 November 1919. Jinnah ridiculed the idea of Indian Muslims being agitated over events in distant Turkey and denounced the Congress professions to side with the Muslims in it. But for the moment it seemed that the politician in Gandhi had triumphed ever the idealist and he fully exploited the situation. When the Congress, at Gandhi's behest, decided

104 Speech made by Ghulam Mahmud at the session. Quoted in Bhavan's *History and Culture of the Indian People* (ed.) R.C. Majumdar, 1969, vol XI, p. 238.

105 ibid *op. cit.*, p. 238.

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to launch the non-cooperation movement, the Muslims fanatics known as the Moplahs, living on the Malabar coast committed horrible 'massacres of the Hindus, descration of temples, outrages on women, pillage, arson and destruction' in the name of non-violence. Jinnah's attitude remained anti-Congress and anti-Gandhi. When in 1924 Gandhi, moving into Jinnah's own house, went on fast for twenty-one days as a penance for the communal riots, the Muslim leader said the very next year 'However pure Gandhi's character may be, he must appear to me from the point of view of religion inferior to any Mussalman, even though he be without character' According to him, 'even an adulterous and a fallen Mussalman' was any way better than Gandhi. When Gandhi sought Jinnah's co-operation, he clearly told him that his methods and his programme would surely lead to disaster.[107]

Kemal Pasha of Turkey himself abolished the caliphate in 1924, and that brought to an end both the Khilafat Committee and the khilafat movement. This gave fresh life to the Muslim League. It became obvious that the British would ultimately transfer power to Indians and Jinnah began to worry about the future of the Muslims when this came about. At the annual meeting of the League on 28 March 1929, he proposed fourteen points outlining the scheme which would be acceptable to the Muslims. The scheme envisaged a federation with a certain measure of provincial autonomy, and adequate and effective representation of minorities in every province 'without reducing the majority in any province to a minority or even equality.' The Muslim representation in the central legislature was not to be less than a third, and in the cabinets too, both of the central and the provincial governments, one third of the ministers were to be Mohammedans. Representation of communal groups would continue to be by separate electrorates. A demand was made for an adequate share for Muslims in services, having due regard to efficiency. Any territorial redistribution was not to affect the Muslim majority

106 *A History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bhavan (ed.) R.C. Majumdar, 1969, vol. XI, p . 361.
107 ibid, p. 336.

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in the Punjab, Bengal and the NWFP. Jinnah's formula was significant in reiteration of the demand for separate electorates. The principle which the Muslims had pressed before Minto of representation not on the basis of numerical strength but in consonance with 'political importance' and of their being rulers before the British stepped into their shoes, appeared to have become an obsession with Jinnah. Meaningful too was the insistence on the maintenance of Muslim majority in the Punjab, Bengal and NWFP. It portended what Jinnah was soon set upon—Pakistan, or the Muslim homeland. The impetus towards partition gathered speed with the utterances of Mohammad Iqbal, poet and philosopher. Presiding over the League session at Allahabad in December 1930 he talked of 'communalism in its higher aspect', which he thought was 'indispensable to the formation of a harmonious whole in a country like India.'[108] He put up a positive demand for a Muslim state. 'I would like to see' he said, 'the Punjab, NWFP, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state. Self-government within the British empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim state appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of North-West India.'[109]

The Simon Commission Report was published on 7 June 1930, and that followed the abortive Round Table Conference. The Gandhi-Irwin pact emphasised federation but subjected it to safeguards for various matters like external affairs, defence and the position of minorities. It opened the way to negotiations, which unfortunately failed due to British reluctance to give anything substantial. Civil disobedience was re-started, but this time without the active co-operation of the bulk of Muslims. After it had finally ended, the British government brought out the Act of 1935 spelling out a federal structure for India with the voluntary integration of the states. In the elections which followed the reforms of 1935, the Muslim League did not fare well, but even then managed to capture 16 seats in the Legislative Council out of 325 and 103 out of 1,585 in the Assembly.

108 *Speeches and statements of Iqbal*, Lahore, 1944.
109 Ibid.

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With the establishment of Congress ministries, the League emerged as a party in competition. A number of Muslims who hitherto supported the Congress began to transfer their loyalties to the League. It was Congress's obduracy which led to this changing of sides. To start with there was little difference between the electoral programmes of the Congress and the League. Nehru admitted this in his letter to Jinnah of 4 February 1938, in which he speaks of 'a very large measure of agreement between us not only in regard to fundamentals, but even regarding many details.'[110] Despite the Congress going back on its clear promise to allot the League two seats in the UP cabinet in case of a joint victory, the League participated in a strike which the Congress organised when it failed to get office on its own terms. The Congress, however, tried to split up the League by inducting nationalist Muslims in it to come over their side. Khaliquzzaman and others were offered such a bait, and the terms were that the League should cease to function as a separate group and merge its identity with the Congress. This meant virtually the extinction of the League in UP. It is not surprising that both Jinnah and Khaliquzzaman refused to agree to such humiliating terms. Of the Muslims only two defected to the Congress, one of them being Mohammed Hafiz Ibrahim. The Congress had accused the British of following a divide and rule policy, and here it was doing much the same for the Muslim League. No wonder Jinnah's call to Muslims to rally round the League's banner found a ready response. Mournfully he exclaimed 'all safeguards and settlements would be a scrap of paper, unless they are backed up by power.'[111] Distrust is like a forest fire which spreads and spreads once it is ignited. In this case the religious and cultural differences were already there, and to these were added the hoisting of the Congress flag, the singing of *bande mataram*, the use of Hindi in preference to Urdu, inadequate representation of Muslims in local bodies, the Hindu oriented educational system, music before mosque and cow-slaughter.[112] Many leaders on both sides

110 Nehru Papers, File No. J-46, pp. 11-12.

111 G. Allana (ed.) *Pakistan Movement Historical Documents*, p. 143, *op. cit.*

112 B.B. Misra, *Ths Indian Political Parties*, Oxford, 1976, p. 426.

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tried to bridge the gap, but the gulf was too deep. Congress approach remained rigid, and led to a hardening of Jinnah's attitude. When Gandhi said about Jinnah's speeches that he missed in them 'the old nationalist', Jinnah retorted that 'nationalism could not be the monopoly of any single individual.[113] Nehru's letters to Jinnah made matters worse. Jinnah ultimately wrote to Nehru pointing out the 'arrogance and militant spirit' of his letters 'as if the Congress is the sovereign power.' He said that unless the Congress recognised 'the Muslim League on the footing of complete equality', a Hindu-Muslim settlement was not possible. Jinnah offered to form coalition governments with the Congress, but instead of exploring this as a possible solution, the Congress chose to resign from the ministries on 22 December 1939. What was D-day for the Congress was V-day for the League. When Congress decided on civil disobedience again, Jinnah would have nothing to do with it. By this time he thought if the Congress used such weapons of coercion against the British and succeeded, it would place the Muslim minority at the complete mercy of the Hindus. Civil disobedience he said was 'a pistol directed at the heads of Mussalmans.'[114] Jinnah had conceived of Pakistan in these years, although he did not use the word. He began to distrust any move for a national government in which he feared the Muslims would be out-numbered and crushed down by Hindus combined with other like Sikhs, Christians, scheduled castes and so on. If a national government was to come at all, he said, it should be not for the people of India, but for the Muslims too who would not be satisfied with anything short of a Pakistan.

After the Quit India movement launched by the Congress, the Muslim League under Jinnah's leadership became still more powerful. The cleavage between Hindus and Muslims widened and the Muslim demand of partition was voiced more strongly. Gandhi, who was in jail, had a long and fruitless correspondence with Linlithgow. When he threatened to go on a fast, the viceroy was unmoved and called it an attempt to politically

113 Ibid, p. 427.
114 Ibid, p. 433, *op. cit.*

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blackmail him. The fast was ended, and when there was no release for Gandhi, an All-Parties's Conference tried to work out a solution. Nothing came of it, and the viceroy told the leaders of the Conference that 'as long as Congress policy remains what it is, there can be no question of any alteration in our attitude towards the Congress.'[115] Gandhi then appealed to Jinnan to meet him, but Jinnah turned down the suggestion. He said Gandhi merely wanted 'to embroil the Muslim League to come into clash with the British Government solely for the purpose of helping his release so that he would be free to do what he pleases afterwards.'[116] Clearly Gandhi had lost face. Jinnah and the Muslim League had gained in prestige. Jinnah was quick to press on his victory by the time Lord Wavell took over as viceroy of India.

(2) The Communist Party[117]

The rise of Communism in India dates back to 1920 and sprang from the revolutionary nationalists and the followers of the khilafat movement. The persons responsible for bringing this creed to India were Virendra Nath Chattopadhyaya, and Narendra Nath Bhattacharji, better known as M.N. Roy. The first to reach Russia, the fountainhead of communism, was Chattaopadhyaya. He did not favour communist propaganda in India until such time as she attained freedom. Roy, who had an adventurous career before finally arriving in Russia, had different views. He advocated the introduction of communism in India forthwith. At the Third International Congress at Moscow he suggested the formation of an Indian communist wing which would liason with British communists. Roy was sent to Turkestan by Russia and made Tashkent his headquarters. There, with the support of revolutionary Muhajirin, he constituted an Indian Communist Party. Branches of the

115 Munshi, *Indian Constitutional Documents*, 1, p. 432.

116 Shariffuddin Pirzada (ed.) *Quid-i-Azam Jinnah's Correspondence*, Karachi, 1966, p. 85.

117 The material for this has been obtained from Dr B.B. Misra, *The Indian Political Parties*, Oxford, 1976.

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party were established at Calcutta in 1921, and at Benares Kanpur and Lahore in 1922.

Another prominent communist worker was Sripad Amrit Dange, who founded in Bombay in 1922 a journal called the *Socialist*. Dange met Roy and evolved the idea of a new revolutionary mass party. In Madras, Singaravelu Chettiar, a labour leader, was responsible for the growth of communism. Singaravelu was not in favour of the western lead given to communism and wanted an indigenous party, which he named the Labour and Kisan Party. The aim set forth by him was economic relief to the masses and 'labour swaraj by non-violent means.'[118]

Dange and other Communists were convicted in a Kanpur case. An indirect results of their conviction was that the communist doctrine received a great deal of publicity. At this stage the creed was little more than that of civil disobedience, which the Congress itself advocated. Gandhi's hurried decision of Bardoli calling off the civil disobedience movement he himself had started, all because a peaceful mob which was fired upon got infuriated and burnt up the police station killing all the policemen in it, was resented by Roy. But so was it by some Congressmen themselves, as for example, Sampurnanand, who wrote: 'We are all sorry for what happened at Chauri Chaura, but this cannot justify the Bardoli retreat...I remember to have read a book by Lenin wherein he says that the Bolsheviks always co-ordinated their legal with their illegal activities.'[119] In its issue of 10 September 1924 the *Bande Mataram*, which was published from Lahore, announced the formation of an Indian Communist Party with branches at Calcutta, Madras, Kanpur and Bombay. The initiative for this was from the Russian Comintern. Only a month after the Indian communists made an appeal to the Congress through a leaflet which advocated the organisation of a Revolutionary Nationalist Party for swaraj outside the empire, public contol of agriculture and industry, and freedom of education and

118 Home (Pol.) File 25 of 1923 (April), Serial no. 3, para 2, p. 28 (Quoted in B.B. Misra, *Indian Political Parties*, Oxford, 1976, p. 105).
119 B.B. Misra, *Indian Political Parties*, Oxford, 1972, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

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religious worship. By the year end communist influence had started affecting the Congress.

The main person behind the formation of the Indian Communist Party was Satya Bhakta of Nagpur whose policy was to capture the councils and through them the key industries and thus secure control over natural resources. Meanwhile in 1923 Russia concluded a trade agreement with Britain, and there was a whittling down of the communist movement.

The British government had been closely observing the rise of communism in India. In a memorandum sent to the Soviet in 1923 it complained that 'a number of banknotes of 100 £ each, issued through Lloyd's Bank and the Russian Commercial and Industrial Bank in London to Nikolai Klishko, Assistant Official Agent of the Soviet Government in London in June 1921, were cashed in India on behalf of a revolutionary Punjabi in touch with other Indian seditionaries 'who are known to have been closely associated with the Russian representative in Kabul.'[120] M. Raskolnikov had thought it necessary to assign 25,000 gold roubles for assisting Indian revolutionaries, and in September 1922 'the Soviet Government had borne the expense of equipping and despatching to Indian and other Eastern countries sixty-two Oriental students trained in propaganda schools under the Third International.'[121] Still the British Intelligence Bureau did not consider the communist menace serious. The persons in charge of it, they reported, were 'men of straw, without money or influence and the movement 'had a paper existence.'[122] In India Jawaharlal Nehru was much of the same view, and wrote to Sampurnanand 'most people like to talk of revolution and direct action, but they have no desire to participate in it.' Nevertheless the Communists had made so much inroad in Indian politics that their influence could no longer be ignored. A confidential memorandum of the Home Department pointed out that, though 'not yet formidable', the Communist party 'might become so if it were treated as negligible. Its obvious

120 C.H. Philips, *Select Documents*, Oxford, 1962, p. 254.
121 Ibid, p. 255.
122 H. Williamson (ed.) *Communism and India*, 1935, pp. 3-4.

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importance in view of the attention bestowed on it from Moscow requires no emphasis.'[123]

True enough the communist movement was intensified, but it was not due to 'attention from Moscow'. Ironically enough it was Englishmen themselves who gave it momentum. Philip Spratt, a British Communist leader, arrived in India on 31 December 1926 and, with the co-operation of Indian Communists, organised a Worker's and Peasant's Party in Bombay and Calcutta. Spratt wanted the Indians to achieve independence by those very means which the Congress had thought of. But he wished non-cooperation to continue till the end was achieved, not to carry on by fits and starts. Soon other non-Russian foreigners fellowed Spratt's lead, like Percy E. Gladding, George Allison alias Donald Campbell, Benjamin Francis Bradley, Hugh Lester Hutchinson, Ryan of Australia and J.W. Johnstone an American.

Russian interest continued, and cotton textile workers in Bombay, railway employees of Bengal and others began to agitate. Soon the movement spread to Delhi, Kanpur, Allahabad, Jhansi and Gorakhpur. Although foreign influence was the foundation of the Indian Communists, the rest of the structure was decidedly Indian. The creed had a peculiar fascination for some of the Congress leaders. Jawaharlal Nehru, says a government of India despatch, demanded, among other things, 'the complete withdrawal of the alien army of occupation' and 'non-participation of Indians in any war waged by the British government.' The despatch concluded, 'There is no doubt that P. Jawaharlal Nehru is anxious to link up the Congress with the avowed enemies of the British Empire abroad.'[194] For the first time the All India Congress Committee of 1929 dealared that India's poverty and misery were due to the ill-arranged economic structure of society, and revolutionary changes were needed to remove its gross inequalities. The Congress, however, was not in favour of actively supporting the

123 B.B. Misra, *Indian Political Parties*, Oxford, 1972, *op. cit.*, (Home Pol. File No. 82 and K.W. of 1925, para, 8).

124 B.B. Misra, *The Indian Political Parties*, Oxford, 1972, *op. cit.*, p. 207 (Govt. of India to U.S. of State, Home Dept. No. 8 of Jan. 12, 1928, para 6).

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Communists. There was a bourgeoisie element in it which held it back. Besides terrorism, which slowly infiltrated into it, was no part of western liberalism which dominated the early communists. The arrest of communist leaders in the Meerut conspiracy case gave the party a set back. But the trial and conviction resulted in a lot of publicity also. Yorke, the judge who delivered judgement in this case, came to conclusion that 'the Communist International had been assisting and instigating Communists in India to active work.'[125] The methods which had been evolved for this, according to the judge, were:[126]

(a) incitement generally of antagonism between capital and labour ;
(b) the creation of Workers's and Peasants's Parties, Youth Leagues, Trade Unions etc., for the benefit of their members, but mainly in reality for the purpose of propaganda ; such parties to be organised and run by communists;
(c) the case of existing Trade Unions, political bodies and the like, their capture in the communist interest by the introduction of fractions or nuclei consisting of Communists
(d) encouragement of strikes, *hartals* and demonstrations.
(e) Propaganda by speeches, newspapers, articles, leaflets, celebration of anniversaries and 'days'.
(f) utilisation of any other movement hostile to the government, such as Bardoli, Independence League etc.

With the arrest of prominent Communists the party broke up into small units, the most effective of which was the Girni Kamgar Union (Red Flag) which started functioning in Bombay in 1923. But even this bifurcated into two groups, the reformist which supported the Congress, and the communist group led by S.V. Deshpande and B.T. Randive. The latter group claimed to represent the official Communist party and constituted the Lal

125 C.H. Philips, *The Evolution of India and Pakistan, Select Document*, Oxford, 1962, pp. 261.
126 Ibid, p. 261-2.

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Paltan (Red Battalion) for organising strikes and meetings among workers. Later Randive formed a separate sub-group called the Lal Bavla (Red Flag) Girni Kamgar Union. The reformists, led by M.N. Roy, believed that 'the way to communism lies through the national revolution', and so they worked through the Indian National Congress, the Youth Leagues and other organisations. It was their influence which ultimately led to the formation of the Socialist wing of the Congress Party.

In 1933 the Communist party of India was organised as the basis of a draft emanating from China, Britain and Germany. This was the 'Open Letter to Indian Communists.' Party committees were formed and a course of action chalked out which had four main objectives:

(1) the transformation of individual strike into a general political strike
(2) the development of spontaneous peasant movement against rents, debts or taxes into an all India movement
(3) a nationwide movement for complete independence
(4) the spread of revolutionary propaganda among the police and the army[127]

The plan aimed at a proletarian urban revolution against foreign rule, capitalists, landlords and money-lenders which would be later on extended to the villages. A series of strikes were engineered in the cotton mills of Bombay. Communist leaders were arrested, but the party had emerged as the sole champion of the working classes. Workers of railways, textiles, and the jute industry, were affected by the movement. Strike had become the potent weapon of the communists.

The outbreak of the second world war galvanised the EPI to fresh activity. The brilliant victories of the Axis powers made most Indians believe that defeat for Britain was certain. Jawahar Lal Nehru wrote to Maulana Azad 'the British Empire is doomed...it is almost a thing of yesterday.'[128] This being so,

127 B.B. Misra, *The Indian Political Parties*, Oxford, 1972, p. 261.
128 Nehru Papers, File No. A-115 (i) p. 37 (16 May 1940).

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most of the parties felt that with a little effort on their part the yoke of British rule could very easily be shaken off. On the eve of the war there were three more parties apart from the CPI and the CSP (Congress Socialist Party) namely the Forward Bloc of Subhas Chandra Bose, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, and Roy's Radical Democratic Party.

While the Congress Socialists planned defiance of repressive measures, peasant agitations, and workers's strikes, the left wing parties, which were better organised, had a more aggressive and comprehensive plan. The CPI which spearheaded the Communist movement during the war, wished to involve peasants and workers on a massive scale. They had plans for organised sabotage, such as 'wrecking communications, tampering with the loyalty of troops and the police, and creating feelings of financial and economie instability.' With the intensification of the war, the leaders of the CPI went underground, but despite strict secrecy most of them were arrested. The party was also handicapped because of shortage of funds, and could not get any substantial financial assistance from abroad. Russia's entry in the war on the British side complicated matters still more for the communists. Even then, as a confidential report of 1940 said, circulation of communist leaflets and propaganda became wider than before. A manifesto of the CPI issued on 16 March 1940 said 'we are today in a position to launch an attack which Imperialism will not be able to resist... Let tens of thousands of workers come out on the streets and place themselves at the head of the demonstrations. Let the peasant masses hold gigantic rallies all over the country and organise marches. Let the students actively participate in the Day's celebrations. Let Congress Committees everywhere work for making Independence Day a day of mobilisation of the national forces for the battle of freedom.'[129] Among the objectives were 'a democratic Republic with a People's Army, the eight-hour day and a living wage, and freedom from rack-renting and debt-slavery.'[130]

129 C.H. Philips (ed.) *The Evolution of India and Pakistan, Select Documents,* Oxford, 1962, p. 365.

130 Ibid.

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Despite its international affiliations, the Indian brand of communism was very different. An official note described the Communists as nothing more than 'mass terrorists and revolutionaries.'[131] Very few members, observed the note, 'genuinely follow Communist doctrines or may be accurately termed real Communists.'[132] The Indian Communists did not think it inconsistent to assist Russia and yet injure Britain. They began to consider independence a prerequisite to their fidelity to the Soviet. In this they were in agreement with Nehru who, while expressing his sympathy with China and Russia, said that independence with real transfer of power was, however, a pre-condition.

With the entry of Japan into the war the attitude of the Indian Communists underwent a change. In a Memorandum of 1942 the party expressed a 'burning and ardent' desire to co-operate with the war-effort. If the Communist leaders were released from jail, the party promised to raise recruits, train guerillas, organise civil defence and prevent strikes. 'We have only one desire today' they asserted, 'to do 24 hours's duty against the Japan and German invaders of our land, the enslavers of entire mankind.' The Communists showed so much zeal that they even helped in getting those nationalists arrested who were still against British imperialism. The British government maintained a cautious attitude towards the Communist demand for release of their leaders. They released some, but kept in others. The Communists also supported the move of the Muslim League for partition. They maintained a lukewarm attitude to the Quit India movement. Thus the gap between them and the Congress widened. This was to come to a head three years later, by which time Linlithgow had ceased to be viceroy. 'The opposition to the Indian Communists was not merely political,' Nehru said at Beawar on 23 October 1945, 'the whole nation is angry with them.'[133] On the other

131 *Communist Party of Great Britain, Policy Tactics*, Home (Pol.) File no. 7/2/42—Pol. (I) of 1942, pp. 7-8.

132 Ibid.

133 C.H. Philips (ed.) *The Evolution of India and Pakistan, Select Documents*, Oxford, 1962, p. 367.

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hand P.C. Joshi, the Communist leader, accused the Congress of 'demonstrating sectarian arrogance' and of dividing and disrupting 'the freedom forces themselves.'[134] About the Congress opposition to the Muslim League Joshi said: 'Their declaration to fight against the Muslim League will only unleash forces of civil war, not forge the future Indian Union. To glorify the strength of the Congress and deny that of the League is to be blind. To demand of self-determination from the British and to deny it to a section of our own countrymen is plain injustice.'[135]

(3) *The Hindu Mahasabha*

The All India Hindu Mahasabha party was founded in 1915 at Hardwar. Its origin lies in the Punjab where the Hindu minority which held the monopoly of wealth, power and talent, was given a bad deal, both in the new land legislation as well as in the Minto-Morley reforms. A Hindu Sabha was formed in the Punjab in 1907. Thus the party came into existence as a reaction against the Muslim dominated League as well as against the appeasement policy of the Congress. But the Mahasabha was not against the Congress, except in so far as the Congress was Muslim oriented. Madan Mohan Malaviya who presided over the Mahasabha session held at Belgaum on 27 December 1924 said 'It would be a shame if any Hindu opposed the National Congress. Their (Mahasabha's) object was to support and to strengthen the Congress.'[136]

In the earlier stages the Mahasabha was more of an organ for religious and social reform than a party with political aims. The words 'Hindu Sabha' were used for the first time in 1890 by its founder-president, Sankariah of Madras who opposed the proposal to raise the marriage age of girls from ten to twelve. In its view the Mahasabha was orthodox, believing in saving Hinduism from nihilists, atheists and free thinkers, and

134 Ibid. p. 368.
135 Ibid, pp. 368-9.
136 India Office Proceedings (India), Range 436, vol. 3951, p. 1, 28 Nov. 1890.

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maintaining a typical Brahmanic outlook in relation to the low castes and women.

With the outbreak of the Great War of 1914 the Mahasabha became more militantly Hindu and tried to evolve political measures for the large scale conversions of Hindus, particularly the untouchables, to Islam and Christianity. At the conference of the Sabha at Hardwar on 9 April 1915, Maharaja Mahindra Chandra Nandy expressed the fear that, as other religions were making converts and not the Hindus, they might soon be reduced to a minority. Although the Mahasabha counted among its ranks a wide variety of classes and professions like landholders, teachers, government servants and students, it was dominated largely by big zamindars and people of princely blood. It did not have in its infancy any mass appeal. The Sabha opposed separate electorates, which the Lucknow pact had endorsed in 1916, and they worked for a combined Hindu front based on religion to combat such a move. The Hindu-Muslim riots that followed the suspension of the non-cooperation movement in 1922 provided further opportunity for strengthening the Sabha which had by now been established throughout the country. Many Congressmen found a common platform with the Mahasabha, particularly in support of its Shuddhi and Sangathan movements. Coinciding with the annual session of the Mahasabha held at Benares in 1923 four and a half lakhs of Malakana Rajputs who had embraced Islam and were now eager to come back, were re-converted.

In 1930 there was a change in the policy of the Mahasabha and the organisation made an attempt to be more broad-based. A positive economic policy was enunciated by V.D. Savarkar in his presidential address in 1931. The principles were doubtless high sounding and modern in their approach. They included mechanisation and nationalisation of big industries, co-operation of capitalists and labourers and of landholders and tenants, adequate compensation for property acquired by the state, protection of national industries against foreign competition and firm action to prevent and suppress strikes. The conference also emphasised the protection of Hindus from the economic aggression of non-Hindus. Nevertheless this mass appeal never took a practical shape. Bhai Parmanand a Mahasabhite of

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the Punjab, criticised Jawaharlal Nehru for his 'cares for the rule of the masses.' No socialistic principle he said, could make headway without Hindu solidarity and unification.

The Hindu Mahasabha was against any safeguards to minorities, whether they were Muslims or Hindus. They opposed separate electorates as vehemently as the communal award. All government appointments, they urged, should be on the basis of merit and educational qualifications. It is true the Mahasabha cannot be said to represent the Hindus completely, but it would not be quite right to say that they did not represent the Hindus 'in the same sense in which the Muslim League represented the Muslims in 1938 and later.'[137] A number of Muslims still remained outside the League after 1938. In fact the Mahasabha represented the Hindus in much the same spirit as the League represented Muslims. The Muslims looked upon India as a country over which conquest and five centuries of their rule had given them a right, and they were prepared to have it vivisected to enforce that right. In fact Jinnah had clearly said 'Islam was not confined to India. I belong to two circles of equal size but which are not concentric. One is India and the other is the Muslim World... . We are not nationalists but super-nationalists.'[138] The Hindus claimed India as their homeland from before the Muslim conquest and were not willing to have it partitioned. Savarkar had promised in his speech : 'They (The Muslims) would be treated justly (in a Hindu state), for no distinction would be made on grounds of race or faith.' But the Muslims could never trust such a promise for according to Jinnah 'it is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality.'[139] The Mahasabha, despite its small following, had always a potential capacity of becoming more and more popular with the Hindus, as Muslim communalism crystallised. Jinnah himself expressed that at heart the Congress and the Mahasabha were one. 'The

137 *The History and Culture of the Indian People* (ed.) R.C. Majumdar, Bhavan, 1969, vol. XI, p. 612.

138 Jinnah to the Members of the Round Table Conference.

139 Jinnah's Presidential Address at the Lahore Session of the All India Muslim League, March 1940.

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Congress' he said 'masquerades under the name of nationalism, whereas the Hindu Mahasabha does not mince words.'[140]

The Hindu Mahasabha, as could be expected, opposed the formation of Pakistan with great vehemence. During the Quit India movement, when Congressmen were behind bars and the Mahasabha dominated Hindu politics, Savarkar denounced the partition idea strongly. 'The Muslims's duty' he said, 'was allegiance to the nation. Their rights and responsibilities were the same as those of other minorities...the outrageous and treacherous demand for Pakistan would not be tolerated.'[141]

(4) *The Swaraj Party*

The Swaraj Party was really a wing of the Congress, and believed largely in negotiation with the British rulers instead of non-cooperation, and in capturing power by entry in the councils and the legislative assemblies. The party comprised of persons belonging to the upper middle classes such as lawyers, doctors, journalists, schoolmasters, zamindars, merchants, sannyasis and fakirs, and pundits and maulvis.[142] The Swarajists of whom the earliest leaders were C.R. Das and Madan Mohan Malaviya were for moderation. When the Congress determined to greet the Prince of Wales with strikes, demonstrations and black flags, Das and Malaviya tried to avert such a happening, but they were outvoted. The leaders, reinforced by other prominent public men notably Jinnah, again tried to seek a peaceful settlement with Reading, the viceroy then, by a resort to 'the resources of reason and statesmanship.' Ultimately helped more by circumstances...the Chauri Chaura incident and communal riots...than by 'reason and statesmanship,' Gandhi was persuaded to call off civil disobedience.

To those constituting the Swaraj Party the way of peaceful opposition was obviously more suited than *satyagraha* and

140 M.A. Jinnah on the Alienation of Muslims from the Congress October, 1937.

141 *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bharatan, 1969, vol. XI, *op. cit.*, pp. 696-7.

142 B.B. Misra, *Indian Political Parties*, Oxford, 1976, p. 213.

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civil disobedience, the weapons forged by Gandhi for the national struggle. So many leaders like Das, Kelkar and others, and among them Motilal Nehru himself, adopted the method of fighting the British from within the Councils. Motilal who had played an active role in civil disobedience, branded the Congress programme as a 'hotchpotch of pious wishes with a few vague threats of terrible things to follow, thrown in to season the dish for the acceptance of the more important non-cooperators.'[143] But the resolution of Council-entry was rejected by the Gaya Congress conference. C.R. Das, thereupon resigned and formed the Swaraj Party on 31 December 1922 with himself as its president and Motilal Nehru as secretary. The party was thus established as a branch of the Congress.

The Swaraj Party's main objective was 'the speedy attainment of full dominion status', including 'the right to frame a constitution adopting such machinery and system as are most suited to the condition of the country and the genius of the people.'[144] The party aimed at full provincial autonomy and complete control over the bureaucracy. It was the people's right, they believed to control the existing machinery and system of government.[145] In case the government refused to entertain such a demand, the party would resort to a policy of 'uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction.'[146] The party was conservative in the sense that it did not wish to disturb the existing social order. If it was for the peasant and the worker, it equally supported the cause of the landlord and the capitalist.

In the elections of 1923 held under the Act of 1919 the Swarajists could capture barely 33 per cent of the seats. Nevertheless they had a clear majority in the Central Provinces and a significant strength in Bengal. This success was due to the party's efficient organisation, unity of goal and the social homogeneity of its leadership.[147]

For a long time the Swarajists were in opposition in the

143 Home (Pol.) K.W. VI to File No. 67 of 1924 (United Provinces) p. 3.
144 B.B. Misra, *The Indian Political Parties*, Oxford, 1972, *op. cit.*
145 Ibid.
146 Ibid.
147 Ibid, p. 221-2.

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Council. and with the prospect of another election consequent to the Act of 1935, there was an attempt to revive the party. Satyamurti approached the government to form a Swaraj party outside the Congress and independent of it, Gandhi had by now veered round to Council-entry, and welcomed the move. Desai, Ansari and Roy discussed the revival of the party at Patna and on 6 April 1934 The *Statesman* reported 'Free Hand For Congressmen; Revival of the Swaraj Party Welcomed; Mr Gandhi Capitulates on Council Entry.' Despite all this, however, the attempt to revive the party came to naught. By this time the Congress left-wing had grown in dimensions, particularly under Jawaharlal's guidance. The move for the separate right-wing Congress party was sccuttled by the socialists. The Swarajists made a last desperate attempt to secure their existence by incorporating some socialistic programmes in their scheme, such as prevention of class exploitation, safeguarding the interests of workers, and securing the rights of peasants. But they could not agree to completely adopt the left-wing pattern. When the socialists moved an amendment for the party's undertaking the 'organisation of peasants and workers far the purpose of participating in the struggle against imperialism and Indian vested interests allied with them,' the amendment was promptly thrown out.[148] The policy of Council-entry which the Swarajists had advocated was adopted by Congressmen themselves when they entered the elections of 1936-7. The identity of the Swaraj party was thus merged with the Congress.

Linlithgow, an Appraisal

Lord Linlithgow was recalled on 24 October 1943 while Bengal was in the midst of a serious famine which had not been handled well. Reserved, and keeping himself, aloof Linlithgow did not have the dynamism required to deal with the dramatic events of his times, such as Quit India and the Cripps mission. Nehru said he had 'a rock's lack of awareness' and possessed 'the qualities and failings of an old fashioned British

148 B.B. Misra, *The Indian Political Parties*, Oxford, 1979, p. 304, *op. cit.*
149 Ibid, p. 305.

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aristocrat.' Sir Stafford Cripps thought 'the viceroy was not by nature a negotiator at all but a judge...he never disclosed what was in his mind so that it was impossible to know how far, if at all, arguments addressed to him had been fully appreciated.' Cripps concluded 'he is the wrong man for the particular job in hand.'[150] Linlithgow did not lack sincerity of purpose. He wanted to find solutions to Indian problems, and was interested in them. He had a deep interest in Indian agriculture, public health and education. But he could not get close enough to Indian leaders to win their confidence, despite his desire 'to try to make friends with the Congress'.[151] Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru commented on Lord Linlithgow's aloofness, which, he thought, was responsible for the failure of the Cripps proposals :

> 'All these technicalities (over the letter of the constitution) could have been got over if the viceroy had not kept himself behind the *purdah*. I cannot imagine any great viceroy with any sense of appreciation of the danger, behaving in this manner, His whole life at Delhi reminds me of the idols in Hindu temples which are visible to their worshippers only at certain times. If he had only stepped forward and invited Congress leaders and Muslim leaders and spoken to them only a word of encouragement and advised them to come into government, that alone, in my opinion, would have altered the attitude of these leaders.'[152]

This view was also confirmed by an English visitor, 'Europeans and Indian' he reported, 'generally complained that the viceroy kept to himself, Laithwaite and a very small inner circle.'[153] Sir Reginald Coupland who stayed at the viceroy's

150 R.J. Moore, *Churchill, Cripps and India, 1939-1945*, Oxford, 1979, p. 16.

151 Durga Das, *India from Curzon to Nehru and After*, Collins, 1969, p. 175.

152 R.J. Moore, *Churchill, Cripps and India*, 1939-1945, Oxford, 1979, p. 125, *op, cit.*, Sapru to Sir Jagdish Prasad, 19 April, 1942 microfilm, Australian National Library.

153 Ibid, Note by Sir D.T. Monteath permanent US Secretary of State for India, 13 August 1942.

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house and know Linlithgow closely, records his impression of the viceroy thus :

> 'My general impression was that his intellectual capacity is distincly greater than I supposed, and his honesty and sense of duty command one's admiration : but his instincts are conservative : he raises all possible objections so any course : he wants to go slowly and cautiously with as little risk as possible : he had planned his own time table of political advance, and didn't like being jolted. Also a touch of Curzonian self-sufficiency, though not arrogance, He seems to feel the *whole* burden rests on him *alone*.'[154]

On the eve of his departure from India, Linlithgow had a dampening message for freedom loving Indians. 'This country' he declared 'is new to parliamentary institutions and will require a large leavening of British officials and Europeans to ensure their successful functioning.' When Coupland met the viceroy, 'he (Linlithgow) lamented the desperate incapacity of Indians for self-government and their want of political instinct or moral courage, and mused, like a Victorian viceroy that perhaps the natural leaders are the princes.'

The only positive contribution of Linlithgow was in organising the war effort, and that was a service he rendered not for India but for his own country. He raised and equipped an army of two million volunteers and supplied much of the needs of the war theatres. The war effort, in fact, obsessed his mind, and guided him in all his actions. That of course makes him a staunch champion of the British cause, as Coupland points out when he speaks of his departure from the viceroy's presence: 'and as I left, I tried stumblingly to express my gratitude as a humble British patriot.'[157] But that does not make him, as one

154 Ibid, p. 81-2.
155 Durga Das, *India from Curzon to Nehru & After*, Collins, 1969 (adapted).
156 R.J. Moore, *Churchill, Cripps and India*, 1939-1945, Oxford, 1979, p. 81.
157 Ibid, p. 82.

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English writer would have it, 'an outstanding viceroy.'[158] Barring his patriotism, all else about him was mediocre, not outstanding. It was a time in India's history when the representative of the Crown needed the gift of sympathy and understanding; and above all, infinite patience. For that India had to await the coming of Mountbatten.

Lord Wavell (1944-47)

Cripps's mission was doomed to fail for the simple reason that the Conservative prime minister, Churchill, himself did not want it to succeed. Linlithgow curtly got rid of him with a hurried farewell. 'Goodbye Mr. Cripps!' he said, happily dismissing him. Soon after Linlithgow himself had to make his exit. Churchill wanted a viceroy who would carry on Linlithgow's policy of suppression, and desist from hastening constitutional reforms. This meant a hardened soldier who agreed with the ex-viceroy's policies and who hated Congress leaders as much as Churchill hated them. Wavell was just the man. When he got his assignment in 1943 he knew why he had been chosen. He wrote in his Journal 'I am pretty sure that when he (Churchill) appointed me viceroy it was with the intention and and expectation that I should simply keep things quiet in India till the war was over.'[159]

Churchill's animosity to India was bitter. 'What do we gain from India?' he thundered. 'We have lost our trade and all our contracts we have less than 500 civilians in the whole of the service there...and that is to do our duty there, and we are prepared to do that at any cost.'[160] Yet the British prime minister was loath to lose this India from which nothing was to be gained. 'We mean to hold our own' he asserted. 'I have not become the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of British Empire.[161] As Amery observed,

158 H.V. Hodson, *The Great Divide*, Hutchinson, 1969, p. 109.

159 *Wavell's Journal* (ed.) P. Moon 1973, p. 159, entry of 31 July 1945.

160 Sir A.R. Mudaliar to Laithwaite, 21 September 1942, Transfer of Power, iii, 2.

161 R.R. James (ed.) *Winston S. Churcill : His Complete Speeches, 1897-1963*, 1947, vi. 6688-95. Speech of 10 November 1942.

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while Churchill was prime minister there could not be much positive progress with the Indian deadlock.'[162] As for 'doing our duty,' it is difficult to imagine what Churchill meant, but connecting it up with a 'terrific tirade against the whole conception of Indian self-government'[163] which came from him shortly afterward, it perhaps meant, to keep on ruling.

Wavell took over as viceroy in October 1943. Churchill had sent him to put up a 'no change' sign on the viceregal gateway. But soon the viceroy realised that the breeze of change had by now become a gale, and the sign would be blown off. He agreed with Amery that Churchill knew 'as much of the Indian problem as George III did of the American colonies.'[164] So he thought it more prudent to do something, albeit small, for Indian aspirations. It was of course an uphill task, for he knew Churchill would need much persuasion. Only over his dead body would any approach to Gandhi take place, the prime minister had said,[165] and he had made the War Cabinet agree that 'the onus of disavowing the present attitude should remain with the Congress and there should be no negotiations with Gandhi.'[166]

Nevertheless the more Lord Wavell studied the Indian situation the greater was his feeling that something positive needed to be done. Soon after taking charge he had made up for his predecessor's apathy for the famine striken victims of Bengal by touring (February 1944) the vast ravaged areas of the province. He also won the gratitude of Congress by releasing Gandhi on medical grounds. Gandhi promised to call off civil disobedience and co-operate in the war effort if a declaration of Indian independence was made. The climate was now suitable for negotiations, and the viceroy thought it would be best if Indians themselves found out a solution.

162 Amery to Hoare, 10 June 1943. Templewood Papers, XIII, 19.
163 Amery to Linlithgow, 13 November, 1942, *Transfer of Power*, iii, 178.
164 *Wavell's Journal*, 27 July 1943, 12.
165 *Wavell's Journal*, 8 October 1942, 23.
166 Memo by PM, October 1943, *Transfer of Power*, iv. 165, War Cabinet, 7 Oct. 1943.

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Efforts for a Settlement

A move was made by Rajagopalachari, who had already discussed a plan with Gandhi in jail. According to this, the League would co-operate with the Congress in working for independence. They would form a provisional national government. After the war those districts in the north-west and the north-east where Muslims were in a majority would be demacarted by a commission, and a plebiscite held to decide whether or not the people wanted separation from India. In the event of partition there would be a mutual agreement for carrying out defence and for commerce and communications. Jinnah said he would place Rajagopalachari's scheme before the Muslim League. The Rajagopalachari formula was very near what Jinnah wanted. One would have thought he would readily accept it, particularly when the League had given him full authority to negotiate with Gandhi who had in the meantime suggested a meeting. But as 'easy winning makes the prize seem light,' Jinnah felt he should ask for more. Disdainfully spurning Rajagopalachari's offer he said it was 'a shadow and husk, a maimed, mutilated and moth-eaten Pakistan.'

The Hindu Mahasabha was opposed to any compromise on a separate Pakistan. Savarkar indignantly exclaimed 'The Indian provinces were not the private property of Gandhiji and Rajaji so that they could make a gift of them to anyone they liked'. Nothing came out of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks. Gandhi considered India to be 'one family consisting of many members of whom the Muslims of the north-west zones desire to live in separation from the rest of India.' Jinnah wanted the Mussalmans to be considered a separate nation. Gandhi wished only the area habited by Muslims of Baluchistan, Sind and NWFP, and of *parts* of Punjab, Bengal and Assam to form a Pakistan if the Muslims in them so voted, subject to territorial adjustments as envisaged in the League's Lahore resolution of 1940. Gandhi wanted separation *after* independence. Jinnah said, 'separation first, independence afterwards.' Gandhi wanted departments having inter-provincial ramifications, like defence, foreign affairs, communications, customs

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and commerce to be governed by a separate treaty. Jinnah said they could not be centralised in this manner. Referring to certain resolutions of the AICC which were against partition, Jinnah asked Gandhi how it could be supposed that while speaking in his individual capacity he was voicing the views of the Congress. 'Why not accept the fundamental of the Lahore Resolution' Jinnah concluded, 'and proceed to settle the details?[167] The talks were an excercise in futility, but Jinnah gained in prestige, with added benefit to the Muslim League. The talks failed because of fundamental differences in the outlook of the two leaders. Gandhi's comment was that they seemed to 'run on parallel lines and never touch one another.'

Seeing the fruitless efforts of Indian leaders, Wavell thought of acting as a mediator himself, a decision which was heartily endorsed by all his governors whom he had called for consultation. He wrote to Churchill on 24 October 1944: 'The present Government of India cannot continue indefinitely, or even for long...If our aim is to retain India as a willing member of the British Commonwealth, we must make some imaginative and constructive move without delay.'[168] The viceroy suggested a transitional government at the centre with the consent of the principal leaders of the parties and the representative of the minorities. This would act through a transitional executive comprising an equal number of caste Hindus and Muslims, with one representative of the scheduled castes aud one of Sikhs, together with the governor general and the commander-in-chief. The transitional government's task, apart from governing and continuing the war effort, would be to draw up a consititution for Indian independence, restore popular government in all the provinces, and negotiate with the British government for the transfer of power. Amery, the secretary of state, thought that the proposed executive council would be bogged down by dissensions. He felt the Congress and League were so much against each other that it was impossible for them to agree on any solution. He proposed the viceroy should by-pass them

167 Gandhi-Jinnah Correspondence, *Sapru Committee Report*, 1945 App. V. pp. xxi-xxv.

168 Wavell to Churchill, 24 October 1944, Transfer of Power, V. 64.

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and call more co-operative Indians for reaching a settlement. Wavell told him it would not work, for no solution could be practicable without involving these two major parties. Amery then suggested that his Majesty's Government should forthwith concede dominion status, and after that the British Parliament should have no power to legislate for India except on the request of the Indian government themselves. This was doubtless a bold move and might have been accepted, though Jinnah's assent would have been difficult, seeing that in his erstwhile talks with Gandhi he had insisted on partion *before* independence. Anyway, Amery's plan never got a trial for it remained on paper only. Meanwhile at the instance of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, and with Gandhi's support, a committee from 'one of the main political parties' was set up to go into the question. So Amery's first proposal which Wavell had dismissed as impractical, was now given a chance in a frantic effort to reach a solution.

The outcome was, as Wavell had predicted, a failure. The Sapru Committee proposed a national government at the centre, Hindu-Muslim parity in a constitution making body, joint electorates in place of communal ones, and a three-fourth's majority for a decision, failing which the British government would make an award. Partition was specifically repudiated. Neither the Hindus nor the Muslims accepted the scheme, and Jinnah was positively indignant.

Yet another effort was made by Bhulabhai Desai who had the backing of Gandhi, and Liaqat Ali Khan who said he was acting for Jinnah. Desai suggested complete Indianisation of the executive council, with the League and Congress each getting forty per cent of the seats, and the remaining twenty per cen going to the minorities. Wavell was eager to follow up this solution, for this was almost exactly what he had in mind. But Jinnah denied having given any brief to Liaqat, and Liaqat himself later disowned any understanding with Desai, and the whole thing flopped.

Wavell's appeal to Churchill underlining the need of an early Indian settlement had left the prime minister unimpressed: He had curtly replied 'These very large problems require to be

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considered at leisure and best of all in victorious peace.'[169] The home government were loath to try out Wavell's proposed scheme which was in essence the same as the Cripps offer, except that it did not insist on the constitutional settlement. 'It would' the pundits in Britain felt, 'destroy a sound central government and bring Gandhi to the fore at a time when he had fallen into obscurity.'[170] However the War Cabinet agreed to Wavell's coming over and arguing his case in person.

After getting the green signal, Wavell summoned a grand conference of political leaders at Simla on 25 June 1945. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad attended on behalf of the Congress and Jinnah for the League. The viceroy had separate interviews with Gandhi, who did not attend the conference. It was finally agreed that the composite central cabinet would have fourteen Indian councillors, five each to be selected by the Congress and the League and four nominated by the viceroy. Among the viceroy's nominees would be one Sikh, two Harijans and Sir Khizr Hayat Khan leader of the Unionist Party of the Punjab. The Congress proposed to have as its representatives two Hindus, a Muslim, a Christian and a Parsee. Thus in actual fact there would be seven Muslims on the council out of the fourteen councillors. The League's reaction was favourable, and the Congress began to select names for the viceroy's approval. But suddenly on July 11 the viceroy announced that the talks had failed and the reason as given by him was that Jinnah insisted that all the Muslim councillors should be nominated exclusively by the League as no other party had the right of speaking for the Muslims. This was a fantastic claim for the Congress had a number of Muslims as their members, and it was a Muslim who was representing them at the Simla conference itself.

English historians have tried to bring out that Jinnah's obstinacy in claiming the League as the sole body representing Muslims forced the viceroy's hands at the conference. Hodson says 'by his (Wavell's) straightforward procedures and his

169 Churchill to Wavell, 26 November 1944, *Transfer of Power*, III.
170 R.J. Moore, *Churchill, Cripps and India, 1939-1945*, Oxford, 1979, p, 142.

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acceptance of full blame for failure, Lord Wavell acquired the goodwill of all the principal participants.'[171] But really the viceroy knew better. While the actors were ratting off their parts, there were one or two aides also. The low-down as given by a writer-journalist who was living in the midst of these events, Jinnah, he says, 'was expected to announce his final decision on the viceroy's proposals to the press at his lounge. A few moments earlier, he had, however, received a message from the 'cell' of British Civil Servants in Simla, which was in tune with the diehards in London that if Jinnah stepped out of the talks he would be rewarded with Pakistan.'[172] So when Jinnah was asked 'why he had spurned the Wavell Plan when he had won his point of parity for the League, he replied "Am I a fool to accept this when I am offered Pakistan on a platter ?" '[173] History can obviously not record those numerous talks on phone or within four walls, and those secret instructions which never see the light of day, and yet which shape events as inexorably as the written word. One can hardly imagine that such a substantial promise as Pakistan could be given to Jinnah without viceroy's knowledge. It is one of those things which can remain only in the realm of conjecture, but the abrupt calling off of the Simla conference was certainly out of tune with his initial zeal. Rajagopalachari rightly said that if the viceroy had made it clear there could be no decision without Jinnah's agreement, the Congress might well have known the conference was a waste of energy. Jinnah's position at this moment was not too good. The League ministries in the Punjab, Bengal and NWFP—areas crucial for Pakistan—were in travail. But by successfully vetoing the Simla conference decision, which, but for him might have been accepted, Jinnah acquired importance out of all due proportion. Wavell's recognition that Muslims could find political expression only through the League, made that body the sole refuge for Indian Muslims. Wavell also made Pakistan almost a certainty, and that too when an independent

171 H.V. Hodson, *the Great Divide*, Hutchinson, 1960, p. 128.
172 Durga Das, *India from Curzon to Nehru & After*, Collins, 1969, p. 216.
173 ibid.

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united India was just within grasp. Why he did it must remain a secret between him and Churchill, but it certainly had semething to do with 'dominion over palm and pine.'

The End of the War and Renewal of Negotiations

With the surrender of Japan on 15 August 1945 the six year old world war came to an end. By a strange coincidence the day of Indian independence was destined to come exactly two years after. With the end of the war, Britain could give more attention to the Indian problem. Another good augury was the coming of the Labour government with Clement Attlee as prime minister and Lord Pethick-Lawrence as secretary of state for India. As a first step of goodwill the government announced that general elections which has long been held in abeyance, would be held in the winter of 1945. Thereafter efforts would be made to convene as soon as possible a consititution making body. A broadcast of Attlee to Indians conveyed an appeal to make a united effort for evolving, a constitution which could be accepted by all parties.

The Congress had been disorganised right through the war, with its leaders jailed and its funds depleted. But the same British government which had suppressed it, now by an irony of fate made a blunder which made it even stronger than before. This mistake was the ill-advised step of constituting a military tribunal for trying three accused officers of Bose's disbanded Indian National Army, a Hindu, a Muslim and a Sikh. The British had of course a point inasmuch as they could hardly show leniency to those who had stabbed them in the back when they were engaged in a life and death struggle. But this was the wrong moment to hold such a trial, and there was no earthly reason to bring in a dramatic element by holding it in public. With an election round the corner, Indian parties took full opportunity to play it up. The Congress appointed a panel of eminent lawyers to defend the officers. Sir Taj Bahadur Sapru, Bhulabhai Desai and Nehru were on it. Nehru appeared before the court wearing his barrister's gown which he had discarded twenty-five years back. Jinnah, was prepared to figure in the defence provided the Muslm INA officer on trial, Shah Nawaz Khah,

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dissociated from the others. But he flatly declined, remarking 'we have stood shoulder to shoulder in the struggle for freedom. Many comrades have died on the field of battle inspired by our leadership. We stand or fall together.'[174] The accused INA officers had, within a short time, become national heroes. Ultimately the trial came to naught, for national indignation had mounted high. The officers were simply cashiered. But less than two months later there was a strike in the Indian wing of the IAF and mutiny in the ranks of the Royal Indian Navy. Another offshoot of the trial was the immense gain in the Congress's prestige, which was reflected in the ensuing elections. The Congress captured practically all the general seats in these elections while the Muslim League took most of the Muslim ones. The elections proved that the Congress and the League were the only two parties which counted. While the former was dominated by Hindus, the Muslims had by and large chosen the League as their party. The scheduled classes had generally thrown in their lot with the Congress.

The Cabinet Missin

The new Labour government in England was keen for an early solution to the Indian tangle. Attlee decided to send a special mission of the cabinet to India to work out a scheme. The members were Lord Pethick-Lawrence, secretary of state for India, Sir Stafford Cripps, now President Board of Trade and A.V. Alexander First Lord of the Admiralty. Although the object of the Cabinet Mission was the same as that of the Cripps Mission there was difference in the climate, method and approach. The Cabinet committee had more authority. Cripps was given a ready-made formula and asked to make the Indian leaders agree to it. Despite the American backing, Churchill was all the time bullying him and curbing any initiative Cripps might be bold enough to take. Besides Churchill himself was not too keen for a settlement, and all his attention was directed towards the war. The Cabinet Mission had Attlee's

174 Durga Das, *India From Curzon to Nehru & After*, Collins, 1969, p. 224.

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full confidence. It brought no prepared plan and was a fact finding mission as well as an authoritative body which took final decisions on its own. The Mission did not intend to take part in framing a constitution for India, which, the British prime minister felt should be left to the Indians themselves. One point, however, which the Cripps proposals had emphasised, was made even more clear by the Mission, namely that 'India would be at liberty to choose her own future position in the world, whether inside or outside the Commonwealth.' Explaining the purpose of the Cabinet Mission, Prime Minister Attlee said :

> 'I hope that the Indian people may elect to remain within the British Commonwealth, I am certain that (India) will find great advantages in doing so...But if she does so elect, it must be by her own free will. The British Commonwealth and the Empire is not bound together by chains of external compulsion. It is a free association of free peoples. If on the other hand (India) elects for independence, in our view she has a right to do so. It will be for us to help make the transition as smooth and easy as possible. India herself must choose what will be her future constitution.'

There was of course nothing now in this promise. The offer of dominion status had been often repeated. But there was one thing new indeed. The British always seemed to give with one hand and take away with the other. The excuse they would invariably advance was of the Indian minorities, and of the princes. Attlee was the first to desist from this practice. He said:

> 'I am well aware, when I speak of India, that I speak of a country containing a congeries of races, religions and languages...We are very mindful of the rights of minorities (who) should be able to live free from fear. On the other hand, we cannot allow a minority to place a veto on the advance

175 Dorothy Norman (ed.) *Nehru, the First Sixty Years*, vol. 2, Asia, p. 233, *op. cit.*

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of the majority...There is the problem of the Indian States... I do not believe for a moment that the Indian princes would desire to be a bar to the forward march of India. But, as in the case of any other problem, this is a matter that Indians will settle themselves.'

It seemed from Attlee's clarification that Jinnah's Pakistan was doomed. But, as usual, performance fell short of professions. The viceroy was virtually running after Jinnah to get him to somehow agree to the proposals. When he sent the letter to Nehru asking him to form the interim government he immediately regretted his action. 'He even tried to recall his letter but was informed that it was too late. Thereafter, his own effort was concentrated on counteracting it by bringing the League into the interim government at any cost . . . . Even before Nehru could submit his list of names for the government, the viceroy wanted to send for Jinnah . . . . to persuade him to come into the government.'[177] When Nehru pressed Wavell to have an Anglo-Indian member on the council, though the viceroy saw the advantage in the proposal, he objected to it as it would make the League's entry into the council 'which was of paramount importance, difficult.[178] He even insisted on calling the council 'the viceroy's executive council' instead of 'interim government' just to please Jinnah.[179] When the interim government was reconstituted with five members of the League, Wavell urged that one of the three senior portfolios—external affairs, defence, or home affairs—should be transferred to one of the League members. The viceroy gave up his unreasonable demand only when Nehru threatened to resign, and even afterwards he kept on insisting.[180] Nehru was so much harassed that he 'charged Wavell with failure to carry on the interim government in the spirit he had started it.' 'Wavell' he said 'is gradually removing the wheels of the car and this is leading to

176 Ibid.
177 Dorothy Norman (ed.) *Nehru, The First Sixty Years*, Asia, 1965, vol. 2, p. 245.
178 Ibid.
179 Ibid.
180 Ibid, p. 260 and 261.

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a critical situation.'[181] In despair Nehru exclaimed 'There is a mental alliance between the League and senior British officials.'[182] All this seemed quite contrary to the pledge given by the British prime minister that 'we cannot allow a minority to place a vote on the advance of the majority.'[183]

The Cabinet Mission which arrived in New Delhi on 24 March 1946 was welcomed by all parties except by the Muslims led by Jinnah, who insisted that they were not a minority but a 'nation.' Jinnah also objected to a single constitution-making body. The appeasement of the Muslims started the very next day after arrival. Lord Pethick-Lawrence hastened to clarify that the word 'minority' used by Attlee did not cover Muslims. 'While the Congress are representative of larger numbers (than the Muslims League)' he said, 'it would not be right to regard the League as merely a minority political party—they are in fact majority representatives of the great Muslim community.'[184] It was a brilliant piece of quibbling, but it left one wondering how the smaller in numbers did not qualify for a minority. Sir Strafford Cripps with all his Crippsian ingenuity put it more vaguely. 'As in everything else' he told the press, 'the importance of minorities, their position, and their influence, may well have changed in last five or six years, and we may change the application of any...statement...made in the past.'[185] The importance of minorities could well have changed, as Cripps said, but still they remained minorities.

The Cabinet Mission spent the first three weeks in discussion with the leaders of various political parties, governors, members of the executive council, the princes, representatives of minorities and so forth. They soon found out how impossible it was to reach an agreed solution. The Congress and Muslims League leaders were in violent disagreement on vital issues. Congress wanted prompt withdrawal of the British and opposed vehemently Pakistan for the Muslims. The League on the contrary wanted Pakistan first, independence afterwards. 'Congress is

181 Ibid, p. 273.
182 Ibid, p. 274.
183 Ibid, p. 223.
184 Ibid, pp. 223-4.
185 Dorothy Norman (ed.) *Nehru*, Asia, 1965, vol. 2, p. 224, *op. cit.*

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not going to agree with the Muslim League's demand for Paskistan under any circumstances whatsoever,' Nehru said, 'even if the British government agrees to it. Nothing on earth, not even the United Nations Organisation, is going to bring about Pakistan which Jinnah wants.'[186] Gandhi said that the Muslims, barring a microscopic minority, were all descended from Indians, and condemned Jinnah's two-nation theory. Ambedkar, speaking for the scheduled castes, did not want a constituent assembly at all, which, he feared, would be dominated by caste Hindus. Instead, he was for two ad hoc committees, one for constitutional matters, and the other for communal ones. He also wanted scheduled caste members of the provincial legislatures to form an electoral college for selecting their representatives to the central government.[187] The Sikhs were divided even among themselves, in regard to their reaction. Giani Kartar Singh wanted an exclusive Khalistan for the Sikhs, Baldev Singh was for a united India with weightage for the Sikhs in representation in areas in which they were in large numbers. Master Tara Singh and Harnam Singh preferred a united India, but should a vivesection be decided on, they demanded a separate state for the Sikhs, with an option to federate with either Hindustan or Pakistan.[188] Sapru and Jayakar, the Liberal leaders, agreed to equality of Muslims and caste Hindus in the central government, but strongly opposed partition. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee and L.B. Bhopatkar of the Hindu Mahasabha opposed parity of Hindus and Muslims in the central government while demanding a single united independent India. The talks were doomed to failure with such serious dissensions on major points. Attlee's appraisement of the Indians was not far from wrong. 'There was a great deal of happiness for them' he said 'in asking for everything, and putting down everything that was wrong in India to British rule, and then sitting pretty. I thought that most of them were not really keen on responsibility. They would talk

186 Ibid, p. 225.

187 *The History and Culture of the Indian People*. Bhavan. 1969. vol. XI. p. 731.

188 Ibid.

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and talk, and as long as they could put the responsibility on us they would continue to quarrel among themselves.'[189] A German proverb says 'In unity little things increase, in discord big things decrease.' This is exactly what happened to the talks. By their wranglings the parties talked themselves out of any agreed scheme for independence. But for once the delegation was determined not to return empty handed, and when they found no agreed solution, they drew up a plan themselves. The Mission's proposals were briefly as follows :

> It rejected the two nation theory, 'We are unable to advise the British government' they said, 'that the power which at present resides in the British hands should be handed over to two entirely separate sovereign states.' The reasons for the decision were, 1. In case a separate Pakistan was given there would remain in it prominent pockets where the population was predominantly non-Muslim, 2. Pakistan as a smaller unit would not be agreed upon by the League and would mean an irrational division of Bengal and the Punjab, 3. Transport, the post and telegraph system, and the fighting forces would face disruption, 4. The proposed Pakistan would be in two halves separated by the huge Indian mainland. This would hinder its defence and communications.

The Mision also rejected the Congress scheme of 'full provincial autonomy subject only to a minimum of central subjects, such as foreign affairs, defence and communications,' with the provinces having the option to cede to the centre, any other subjects they so wished. This would entail constitutional and procedural difficulties. Some ministers would be responsible to the whole of India, others for only some provinces in respect of the subjects so ceded. Certain members in the central legislatures would have to be excluded from voting when subjects which did not concern them came up for discussion.

The Mission recommended a Union of India, including the states dealing with the subjects of foreign affairs, defence, and

189 Francis Williams, *A Prime Minister Remembers*, Heinemann, 1961, p. 208.

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communications. Other subjects would be left to the provinces. Any question raising a major communal issue in the legislature would be decided by majority votes of the representatives present of each of the two major communities as well as a majority of all the members present and voting. The provinces would be free to form groups with executives and legislatures, and each group could determine the provincial subjects to be taken in common.[190] There was a provision whereby a province could change its constitution every ten years by a majority vote of its legislative assembly. The Mission merely provided the outline of a way in which the constitution-making body might be set up. The Mission thus observed: 'It has been necessary however, for us to make this recommendation as to the broad basis of the future constitution because it became clear to us in the course of our negotiations that not until that had been done was there any hope of getting the two major communities to join in the settling up of the constitution-making machinery.'[191]

The reaction to the Cabinet Mission's proposal again were mixed. The Scheduled Castes Federation said that the plan's protection given to them was 'absolutely illusory and unworthy of serious consideration.' The Sikhs declared that 'no constitution will be acceptable to them which did not meet their just demands and is settled without their consent.' The Hindu Mahasabha rejected the 'principle of regionalism based on communalism.'[192]

The Congress thought that the clause on grouping meant that each province could choose to join the appropriate group or stay out. The Mission clarified that the intention was the grouping would be compulsory. Gandhi said the plan was worthy of acceptance, and the Mission had brought something

190 The country would be divided into three zones, A, B and C. B zone would include the Punjab, Sind, NWFP and Baluchistan. This would constitute a Muslim majority area. C zone would cover Bengal and Assam with a small Muslim majority. A would include all predominantly Hindu territory between the B and C zones. Norman (ed.) *Nehru*, Asia, 1965 vol. 2, p. 230).

191 C.H. Philip, *The Evolution of India and Pakistan, Select Documents*, Oxford, 1962, p. 382.

192 Michael Edwardes, *The Last Years of British India*, Cassell, 1963, p. 107.

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of which they had every reason to be proud. Jinnah's attitude had softened by the positive declaration of the Mission that it could never recommend partition. After a three days's meeting of the League, as advised by Jinnah himself, it agreed to accept the scheme.

The main hurdle having been crossed, the viceroy went ahead with the next step, viz. the formation of the interim government. Initially the task seemed as difficult as getting an agreement on the Mission's scheme itself. But Wavell anticipated that, for he proclaimed that if the two major parties did not agree he would himself proceed with the formation of an interim government,' which would be 'as representative as possible' of those who accepted the Cabinet Mission plan. The League and Congress not only did not agree with each other, they were opposed even to Wavell's own suggestion of equal representation in the proposed interim government. Ultimately the viceroy suggested an executive council of thirteen members, six Congress (including a person of the scheduled caste) five of Muslim League and two from the minorities. But this was opposed by the Congress. A deadlock having ensued, the viceroy set up an interim government of fourteen persons, whom he named. The list included Nehru and Jinnah, and the grouping was six Congress, five Muslim League, one Sikh, one Indian Christian and one Parsee. Among other conditions, the one most obnoxious to the Congress, was that they would not be allowed to nominate a Muslim in the proposed council. The Congress rejected this new plan, but decided to join the proposed constituent assembly for the purpose of framing a constitution.

The Cabinet Mission could not stay longer in Indian and left on 29 June 1947. Although it had failed to make a final settlement, it had put the process of devising a constitution-making machinery fairly on the way. What was more it had been able to convince Indians of the Labour government's goodwill. Attlee said 'My Cabinet colleagues and the viceroy spent many hours to get a solution which would satisfy both communities. The difficulty did not lie with any unwillingness of Britain to part with power, but with arranging for a succession. Finally, they reluctantly returned home, frustrated, though having accomplished much in the creation of good

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relations, for Indians realised that the Labour government was in earnest in seeking to implement the promises made by Britain.'[193]

The AICC, which met in July 1946 at Bombay accepted the Cabinet plan. Jawaharlal Nehru, who had replaced Azad, presided. His speech disclosed that Congress acceptance was half-hearted and not without strings attached. 'Our idea of independence,' he said 'is that there must be absolutely no foreign domination in India and that India may even break her connection with the British. We want to establish the Republic of India.'[194] He said that this idea of independence 'is certainly very different from what the Muslim League or the viceroy thinks.' He may have been correct in respect of the League and of the viceroy personally, but the British Prime Minister had made it quite clear in his announcement of 15 March 1946 that India was free to stay or not to stay in the Commonwealth. About the constituent assembly Nehru said 'We are not bound by a single thing except that we have decided for the moment to go to the constituent assembly, not certainly to deliver fine speeches but to build something to overcome our problems.'[195] The idea of entering the Assembly was not to commit the Congress to staying in it for ever. 'We will remain in the Assembly' Nehru said 'so long as we think it good for India and will come out when we think it is injuring our cause and then offer battle.'[196] 'The constituent assembly' Nehru said 'can be a useless thing, as well as...a powerful instrument for achieving freedom. Its greatest merit is that although it will be brought into existence by the British Government, they will have nothing to do with it after it has set in motion.' Apparently the practical man and the idealist were struggling in Nehru. He felt something ought to be done to advance on the road to independence, and yet he hated all restraint. He was too much a lover of liberty to make any compromise on that score. Yet he knew one can't obtain it by merely shouting

193 C.R. Attlee, *As it Happened*, William Heinemann, 1954, p. 182.
194 Dorothy Norman (ed.) *Nehru*, Asia, 1965, vol. 2, p. 234.
195 Ibid, p. 235.
196 Ibid.

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'liberty ! liberty !' all the time. 'There is a good deal of talk of the Cabinet Mission's long-term plan and short-term plan' he said. 'So far as I can see, it is not a question of our accepting any plan—long or short.'[197]

Nehru made it clearer when he spoke to the press later on 10 July. The Mission had proposed that an Advisory Committee should report to the constituent assembly in regard to minority rights and the administration of tribal and excluded areas. Another clause incorporated in the Mission's plan was that a treaty would be necessary between the Union Constituent Assembly and Britain regarding certain matters arising out of the transfer of power. About these two matters, Nehru, while admitting that the minority question was there, said 'it is our problem, and we shall, no doubt, succeed in solving it.' But added 'we shall accept no outside interference...certainly not the British government's.'[198] Regarding the entering of a treaty, Nehru admitted that some kind of treaty would be necessary, but he wished it to be voluntary, and as between equals. 'We shall have no treaty' he said 'if they (the British) seek to impose anything upon us, and we shall tear up any treaty they try to impose'.[199] There does not appear to be anything 'injudicious or impolitic'.[200] about these observances. In fact what Nehru had said was not against the Mission's proposals. The Committee for minorities was only advisory. All that he said was he would not accept British interference in any decision he took on the basis of the Committee's advice. The advice would be of the Committee, the decision of the Assembly. In expressing himself strongly against interference, Nehru was perfectly justified, for the British had all along been exploiting the minorities in torpedoing every settlement. As for the treaty, in that too the British, Dalhousie-like, had always tended to overlord. So a treaty between equals was a must when it was with an India for freedom. In being diffident

197 Ibid.
198 Ibid, p. 237.
199 Ibid.
200 *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bhavan, 1959, vol. XI, p. 743.

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about certain states, like Assam, not accepting the grouping, and in desiring a stronger central government, too, Nehru was only facing realities. 'The past few years have shown' he said 'that if there were no central authority,... conditions would have been far worse in India.[201] It would not be quite right to say that 'if Nehru were determined to scare away Jinnah, he could not have devised a better or more ingenious plan.'[202] By now Jinnah had decided, despite his formal acceptance of the plan in the beginning, that he would have Pakistan and nothing else, and that too before independence. His future action consistently points to this. Even when he consented to join the interim government, later on, he firmly said 'We are going into the interim government to get a foothold to fight for our cherished goal of Pakistan... The interim government is one of the fronts of the direct action campaign.'[203] It is sometimes said that Nehru's insistence on conditional entry in the constituent assembly wrecked the Cabinet Mission's plan. If anyone wrecked it, however, it was not really Nehru. Right from the beginning he had been against the conditions about grouping, minorities, the provision about treaty and so forth, by which the Mission sought to stifle free-will and liberty in their effort to seek a compromise. The Mission had arrived in the last week of March. Through April it had held discussions. By mid-May it had announced its own plan, and on 29 June it left. Two and a half months was too short a period to consider such a vital problem as Indian independence. Added to this drawback was Wavell's lack of rapport with any of the Indian leaders, with the exception perhaps of Jinnah. To put it all on Nehru is to be grossly unfair to him. Even before his controversial press statement of 10 July, he had voiced his dissent in his presidential address to the AICC three days earlier. The League too had objected to the Mission's long-range and short-range plans, and had, in fact, 'expressed dismay that Congress was willing to accept the

201 Dorothy Norman (ed), *Nehru*, Asia, 1965, vol. 2, p. 260.

202 *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bhavan, 1969, vol. XI, p. 794.

203 Dorothy Norman, (ed), *Nehru*, Asia, 1965, vol. 2, p. 260.

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long-range plan only conditionally.'[204] Azad's remark that Nehru's press conference of 10 July was 'one of those unfortunate events that changed the course of history,'[205] is really an exaggeration. In any case it loses all force when Azad himself said that if anything went against 'our fundamental principles, we shall not hesitate to kill the constituent assembly.'[206] Neither is Louis Fischer's admission which he got from Nehru that he 'changed the entire basis of the agreement with England' of any marked significance.'[207] There was in fact no 'agreement'. The Mission came to explore the possibility of a soluition. The position kept changing every week, almost every day, like the pieces in a kaleidoscope. One moment it seemed a solution was imminent, and the next it appeared to be far as ever. If there was any one person responsible for these changes, one could name any of the whole lot of negotiators and all those with whom the negotiations proceeded. Why Nehru particularly ? About Nehru's statement that certain provinces may not accept the grouping proposed by the Mission, Mosley remarks 'He (Nehru) was telling the world that once in power, Congress would use its strength at the Centre to alter the Cabinet Mission Plan.'[208] He was not telling the world this at all. All that Nehru was saying was that such a thing *might* happen.

Jinnah objected to Nehru's statement and suggested that the British government should 'remove the impression that Congress had accepted the long term scheme.' The British cabinet pointed out that the purpose of the constituent assembly was in fact the framing of a future constitution. Disagreements could be ironed out in the assembly once it was formed. As regards the grouping of the provinces, Sir Stafford Cripps made it clear that it was not final, and any province which desired to withdraw because it was not satisfied, could do so after the

204 Dorothy Norman (ed.) *Nehru*, Asia 1965, vol. 2, p. 236.
205 Ibid, p. 239, *op. cit.*
206 Ibid.
207 Ibid.
208 Leonard Mosley, *The Last Days of the British Raj*, Weidenfeld & Nicelson, 1961, p. 28.

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first election under the new constitution. Jinnah accused the cabinet of bad faith and maintained Congress had not really accepted the Mission's plan, for it had hedged it about with conditions of its own. The League not only withdrew its acceptance, it decided at the same time to resort to direct action 'to achieve Pakistan, to assert their just rights, to vindicate their honour and to get rid of the present British slavery and the contemplated future caste-Hindu domination.' The resolution called upon the Muslim nation to 'stand to a man' behind the League and be ready for 'every sacrifice.'[209] It was more a call for a jehad than agitation. The League council reminded the Muslims that it was in the month of Ramzan that the 'first open conflict between Islam and heathenism.'[210] was fought, and the Muslims would be starting 'a jehad this very month of Ramzan.'[211] A leaflet bearing a picture of Jinnah with sword in hand, stated 'We Muslims have had the Crown and have ruled. Be ready to take your swords... O Kafer ! your doom is not far off and the general massacre will come.'[212]

Meanwhile the elections had been held and the Congress had won all the general seats save nine, while the League had all but five Muslim seats. The viceroy invited Jinnah to form the interim government and, on his refusal, Nehru. The Congress authorised Nehru to form the government, and Nehru tried to obtain Jinnah's co-operation by offering five seats out of fourteen to the League's nominees. But when Jinnah insisted that Congress had no right to put any Muslims from their side on the council, the talks broke down. Jinnah now carried out his threat of direct action. As could be expected, all the horrors of a jehad were let loose. The British governor emulating Nero, did nothing to check it. But when the Hindus, seeing the administration's indifference, retaliated, he woke up to action. Calcutta had the worst of it with 6,000 hacked, battered, burned, stabbed or shot, and another 20,000 raped or

209 Dorothy Norman (ed.) *Nehru*, Asia, 1965, vol. 2, p. 243.
210 Ibid.
211 Ibid.
212 Ibid.

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maimed.'[213]. The *Statesman*, while reporting the incidents observed 'The primary blame lies upon the Muslim League cabinet and particularly upon the chief minister (Suhrawardy).'[214] As if to facilitate the massacre the Bengal government had unaccountably declared the direct action day a holiday. The *Statesman* rightly wrote 'The government of Bengal has failed lamentably in judgment and executive ability. By forcing a general holiday on the public on the Muslim League's day of direct action it has brought about the consequences many feared.'[215]

Despite the disagreement between the Congress and the League, the British government went ahead with the formation of an interim government. Jinnah having refused, the viceroy called Nehru to form it. But the interim government had to function against heavy odds. Jinnah kept trying to wreck it from within, and the viceroy always sided with him. On Wavell's persuasion Jinnah agreed to join the government, but at the same time refused to withdraw the League's Bombay resolution defining Pakistan as the goal. When invitations were finally issued to the members chosen for the interim government, Jinnah withdrew his support again and directed the Muslim League representatives not to participate. The Congress leaders therefore demanded that the League ministers should quit the government.

Forced with a deadlock again, and perhaps the possibility of civil war too, Attlee summoned the viceroy and prominent Indian party representatives to London. There was dispute about the grouping of provinces, the Congress taking the view that the intention of the relevant provision was that the provinces have a right to decide both about grouping as well as their own constitutions. The secretary of state persuaded Nehru to accept the clause of grouping as it stood, on condition that the Federal Court may decide about its interpretation. Attlee emphasised that the British government never wanted to force any constitution on 'any unwilling parts of the country.'

213 Account of Leonard Mosley, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bhavan, 1969, Vol. XI, p. 749, *op. cit.*

214 Ibid, p. 749, *op. cit.*

215 The *Statesman*, August 18, 1946.

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It was a triumph for Jinnah, for it meant the League could always render ineffectual any decision of the constituent assembly regarding the constitution of an Indian Union. Pakistan was becoming more and more a certainty.

The constituent assembly met in this uncertain atmosphere on 9 December 1946, and Rajendra Prasad was elected President. The Muslim members did not attend it. The Muslim League soon began wrecking it by boycotting the sittings and reiterating their direct action programme. The Congress had no alternative except to press the viceroy for the resignation of the League members from the interim government. On behalf of the League, Liaqat Ali Khan represented that when no major party had wholly accepted the Mission's plan 'it was presumptuous on the part of the nine members of the executive council to demand that their Muslim colleagues should resign.' It was a bigger dilemma for Attlee, for whereas before the London conference the Muslim League was quitting, now it might be the Congress. He knew perfectly well that without the Congress joining in, all hope of a representative government was vain.

Miles away, Attlee could sense the Indian situation more accurately than Wavell who was in the midst of it, and he knew that the moment had come when something drastic would have to be done. The Conservatives, of course wanted the British Indian empire to last for ever. Churchill was against handing it over to 'men of straw of whom in a few years no trace will remain.' He considered quitting to be 'a shameful flight' and 'a premature hurried scuttle.' But with all his sharpness, Attlee knew better. There was the greatest likelihood of a civil war in India, with the parties, particularly the League and the Congress, at each other's throats. All the money that could be squeezed out of India by the British had been squeezed, and the maintenance of law and order remained a costly affair with the burden of keeping trusted bureaucrats and an army of British soldiers. The British Civil Servants had no more attraction in India. Thanks to the exploitation of the communal question by the rulers, communal frenzy had attained fearful proportions. First Indians had wanted the British to quit India, now the British

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themselves wished to pack up and go. All this was clearly grasped by Attlee, and in his recollections he says :

'I decided that the only thing to do was to set a time-limit and say: "Whatever happens, our rule is ending on that date." It was, of course, a somewhat dangerous venture. But one had to remember that inevitably the machine of administration in India was running down. It couldn't go on much longer. The process of Indianisation had gone a long way. We had got over the the problem of the army...which had been a serious factor at the time of the Simon Commission. There were now plenty of well trained Indian officers available to take over. But this Indianisation had also resulted in a very heavy reduction in the British cadre in administration. More than half the British in the Indian Civil Service had gone. The ICS Indians worked extremely loyally, but it was idle to suppose that they weren't just as patriotic as everybody else and just as enthusiastic for Indian nationalism...Therefore the machine was running down, and the longer it went on, the worse would administration be and the more difficult it would become for whom ever we handed over to in the end.

'So we decided on a time limit. The Indians were to be told, "We are going out at a certain date." Then I had to consider who could do it.

'Wavell was frankly pretty defeatist by then. He produced a plan worked out by his ICS advisers for the evacuation of India with everybody moving from where they were by stages right up through the Ganges valley till eventually, apparently, they would be collected at Karachi and Bombay and sail away. Well, I thought that was what Winston would certainly quite properly describe as an ignoble and sordid scuttle and I wouldn't look at it. I came to the conclusion that Wavell had shot his bolt, and that I must find somebody else. I thought very hard on that and looked all around. And suddenly I had what I now think was an inspiration, I thought of Mountbatten.'[216]

And so, it was that Mountbatten came to India. It was

216 Francis Williams, *A Prime Minister Remembers*, Heinmann, 1961, pp. 208-9.

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indeed a brilliant choice, for never in history did another man wipe out, as he did, in less than a year the hatred of centuries.

Lord Wavell, An Appraisement

There have been soldiers who were good administrators too, but Wavell was not one of them. He joined with the Indians in making a mess or the Cabinet Mission's plan, and when it left for home, his Congress-phobia spoilt whatever little chances there were of its success. Although in the midst of the Indian drama, he understood very little of it. Lacking completely in initiative, he clung on to formal propriety when he should have relied on commonsense, When, for example, Gandhi had been released from jail on medical advice in 1944, Wavell asked leave of the secretary of state to have a political talk with the Mahatma, and was turned down. Lord Mountbatten, to whom he related this, was astonished that he should have sought permission, when he knew what Mr Churchill's attitude was. 'After all' said Lord Mountbatten, 'if you had seen Gandhi and then telegraphed a report of your meeting, they could hardly have sacked you.'[217]

When he was asked by Attlee to prepare a scheme for British withdrawal, he consulted his narrow-minded ICS Officers and produced a most unimaginative one, which seemed more like a plan of retreat than of withdrawal.

Wavell had begun well, As soon as he joined he went round vast areas of Bengal ravaged by a most devastating famine which his predecessor had bungled. When riots broke out in Calcutta, while neither Nehru nor Jinnah visited the troubled areas, Wavell flew there as soon as the interim government was formed, to see things for himself. He believed in getting knowledge of things first-hand, and this was doubtless a remarkable quality. Where he failed was in getting along with men. He continued the stiff regal attitude of British viceroys when the need was for informality. That is why he could never get close to Indian leaders, as Mountbatten did. Attlee was quick to notice this. 'Wavell had been a very good viceroy in many ways' he said, 'but he was not quite the man to deal with politicians, particularly Indian

217 H.V. Hodson, *The Great Divide*, Hutchinson, 1969, p. 113, fn.

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politicians He was a soldier and a singularly silent soldier. A great man in many ways, you know, but a curious silent bird, and I don't think silent people got on very well with Indians, who are very loquacious. His mind was not supple enough.'[218]

Wavell's lack of statesmanship was partly responsible for the failure of the Simla talks. The INA trials were a tactical blunder and indirectly led to the mutiny of the naval ratings in February 1946. Although he visited Calcutta after the killings of August, he did nothing to prevent or to check them. It was because of his weakness that the Muslim League could go back on its undertaking to join the constituent assembly despite being given representation in the interim government.

Like most men, Wavell was a combination of merit and failings. Sir Henry Channon, who was among his admirers, paid him a qualified tribute :

'A curious man—great in his way, full of honour with the power of shutting his mind, or almost all of it, to the assembled company...He often gave the impression of being dull... . But if he liked someone or was amused, the problem was not how to make him talk, but how to stop him. He was not a politician or a statesman, and his judgment was frequently bad, even childish : but as a writer, a friend and a general he was supreme.'[219]

Unfortunately it was not a general who was needed at this time in India. What was needed was an administrator, and more than an administrator a diplomat someone who was genial not merely to one he liked, but to everyone. India needed a head who could win with a smile not with the sword, for the days of domination were over. Attlee had read the situation right when he said he was sending Mountbatten 'not to continue the British Raj but to end it.'[220] It was not for this that Churchill had chosen Wavell as viceroy, rather so that he

218 Francis Williams, *A Prime Minister Remembers*, Heinemann, 1961, p. 208.

219 *Chips : The Diaries of Sir Henry Chanon*, Weidenfeld & Nicoloson, 1967, p. 378. Quoted in H.V. Hodson, *The Great Divide*, Hutchinson 1969, p. 191.

220 Francis Williams, *A Prime Minister Remembers*, Heinemann, 1961, p. 210.

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'would not precipitate the constitutional issue.'[221] Commenting on his appointment, R.A. Butler under secretary of state for India remarked, 'this must mean that politics are to be put right on one side.'[222] Wavell, who had no liking for politics, and particularly hated the Congress, could hardly be excepted to bring concord in the vehemently warring Indian parties. His failure was nothing personal. It was just that he was the wrong man for the job.

Lord Mountbatten (1947-48)

The Task and its Goal

Lord Mountbatten took over as viceroy on 24 March 1947. At this time India had about four hundred million people, two hundred and fifty million of them Hindus, ninety million Muslims, six million Sikhs, apart from Buddhists, Christians and numberless other sects. It was Mountbatten's task to give independence to these four hundred millions, who had different and generally opposed concepts of what independence was and of how they thought it should be given. It was a challenging task, at which many had failed. But here at last was a man who seemed to have every quality calculated to success. He had charm, of which Nehru was the first victim. 'Mr Nehru' he said as they parted after their first meeting, 'I want you to regard me not as the last viceroy winding up the British Raj, but as the first to lead the way to the new India.' Intensely moved, Nehru said 'Now I know what they mean about your charm being so dangerous'. Mounbatten's words were prophetic also. As one would say in India, the goddess of truth, Saraswati, sat on his tongue, for he did become the first governor general of independent India. His energy too was remarkable—'demonic' as Camppell-Johnson says. 'I never worked so hard in my life, not even during the war' he himself said. An eighteen hour day was normal for him and a twenty

221 R.J. Moore, *Churchill, Cripps and India, 1939-1945*, Oxford, 1979, p. 138.

222 Butler to Hoare, 24 June 1943, Templewood Papers, XIII, 19.

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four hour day quite usual.[223] He had the human touch which made people like him, but behind the cordial mind there was plenty of shrewdness. Being a patient listener he could draw out people so that they readily confided in him, and he knew more tricks to win and influence men, than Carnegie ever imagined. Above all he was a man of resolution, who could 'screw his courage to the sticking place.' Attlee, who sent Mountbatten for the task himself sums up why and how he sent him as follows :

> "Now Mountbatten was an extremely lively, exciting personality. He had an extraordinary faculty for getting on with all kinds of people... . He was also blessed with a very unusual wife... . I saw the King and rather unexpectedly he warmly approved of the idea right away—not everyone would get a member of the Royal Family go and take a risky job, hit or miss, in India as he did. I told him as I'd told Mountbatten too, that I thought the odds were about six to four against success, but they both agreed Mountbatten should take on the job...he was extraordinarily successful from the start. He got on the right side of Nehru, and he managed to get a joint government going for the time being with Jinnah and Nehru and the rest. He got on the right side of Gandhi, too, and soon he had all these people talking constantly. And always prominently on his desk to remind them was a card with the date when we were going. It took a lot of negotiation. But he won, and eventually the day came when we passed the Independence of India Act in the House of Commons.'[224]

It was not always plain sailing of course. There were moments of frustration and despair too. But Mountbatten could handle it all. Knowing the Indian habit of 'agreeing for politeness's sake' and then 'imposing conditions which nullify

223 Alden Hatch, *The Mountbattens*, W.H. Allen, London, 1966, p. 338 (Referred to hereafter as 'Hatch').

224 Francis Williams, *A Prime Minister Remembers*, Heinemann, 1961, pp. 209-10.

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everything'—[225] that was what had wrecked the Cabinet Mission—he would pin down the speaker to what he had agreed and when he came with his second thoughts, behold, there was a written memorandum of what he had agreed, facing him ! He conquered with his wit and geniality but he would be firm too. Once when Jinnah came 'in one of his difficult moods' and described the plan Mountbatten had got through as 'scandalous', he told the Muslim leader that 'unless he accepted it in the morning the Hindus and Sikhs would pull out. Chaos will follow and you will lose Pakistan for good.' That did it, and Jinnah had to agree.[226]

Although much of Mountbatten's success was the result of his personal virtues—and of course the valuable contribution of his gifted wife Edwina—he came to his task with certain advantages which other viceroys did not have. He belonged to the Royal Family and so had the highest backing. Soon after Attlee had asked him to take on the job he had gone to see the King. It would be bad for the King-Emperor Mountbatten had told him 'to have a member of his family fail.' The King had retorted, 'But think how good it will be for the monarchy if you succeed !'[227] Secondly, he had obtained from Attlee authority to act independently of the India Office in London, 'power which had been given to no one in this century' as the prime minister himself admitted.[228] The Indian leaders came to know this soon and realised it was the viceroy who would decide their fate, not someone sitting in London. Thirdly, he had made Attlee agree that no matter whether agreement was reached or not, the British should pull out by June 1948 at the latest.[229] Later he fixed the final date as 15 August 1947, and to remind himself and the Indian leaders constantly of it, had a special calendar made and hung in his committee room showing the days left to 'Independence Day.' This spurred on a solution,

225 Hatch 341.
226 Hatch 343.
227 John Terraine, *The Life and Times of Lord Mountbatten*, Hutchinson, 1968, p. 146 (Referred to hereafter as 'Terraine').
228 Terraine, 148.
229 Hatch, 333.

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for everyone knew that he had to obtain whatever he wanted to get by then. It set the Indian leaders as feverishly in search of an agreement as Mountbatten himself. Finally, he was allowed by Attlee to do another unprecendented thing, viz. to take his own staff with him. It was doubtless a wise step for many a governor general had been let down by die-hard British officers who were too much in love with British imperialism. Given the choice, he chose well. He took with him young active and devoted men—Lord Ismay (the one old person) who had been the ablest soldier-diplomat of the second world war and had now retired, Captain Ronald Brockman who had been his Naval Secretary, Campbell-Johnson a brilliant young public relations expert, and Sri Eric Mieville, who went as his private secretary.[230]

What Mountbatten had to decide was *whom* to transfer power, for the British government had already said that it was to be transferred. He preferred a united India, but if there was no agreement, partition was inevitable. The more he talked with Indian leaders and saw things for himself, the more he felt that it would have to be partition. The riots in Calcutta and other places, virtual civil war in the Punjab, the attempt of 70,000 Muslims bent upon attacking the Government House at Peshwar to show their keenness for Pakistan; all these convinced him that a solution must be found much earlier than June 1948, and it might have to be based on partition.

The Congress were of course against partition, Gandhi most of all, so much so that in an effort to avoid it, he seriously proposed to Mountbatten to ask Jinnah to form a government! He even urged that Indian unity should be maintained by force. 'The policy of your predecessors has brought about a situation' he said 'in which there are only two alternatives, either a continuation of British rule to keep law and order, or an Indian blood-bath.' 'What must I do then ?' asked Mountbatten. 'You must face the blood-bath and accept it' said the man of peace.

Nehru had suggested 'a tripartite administration of the Punjab divided on communal lines with a central authority to

230 Hatch, 334.

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deal with non-communal subjects.'[231] But Jinnah stuck to partition like a leech. Mountbatten puts it vividly in his characteristic manner in his televised biography, reproducing Jinnah's interview:

He argued there must be a partition, otherwise as a minority community the Muslims would be swamped in Hindu India. 'Right' I said. 'Then by the same argument, the two provinces (Bengal and the Punjab) you want in Pakistan, with large non-Muslim minorities, will also have to be partitioned.'

'Oh, no, you can't do that. Punjabi unity and Bengali unity are much more important than Hindu-Muslim differences!'

'In that case' I said, 'surely *Indian* unity is much more important than Hindu-Muslim differences?'

'Oh, no,' said Jinnah, 'we must have Pakistan.'

And so it went on, a circular argument—round and round the mulberry bush. I never met anybody who could say 'No' so persistently and so effectively.[232]

The Idea of Pakistan

It is difficult to say when exactly the idea of Pakistan had begun to crystallise, but it was invariably linked up with the fear Muslims had of being placed under Hindu domination. After the revolt of 1857 the Muslims found a powerful leader in Syed Ahmed Khan who began to feel that Muslim interests would be jeopardised if the English left India. He was against dominion status, or elections to popular councils and assemblies on the basis of universal suffrage. In that case 'no single Mohammedan will secure a seat in the viceroy's council,' he said. The Muslims would be outvoted four to one. He also wanted representation of Muslims in the services. Thus the germ of distrust against a unitary government with both Hindus and Muslims taking part in it, was sown by Syed Ahmed.

Even if the British government was not responsible for creating Muslim distrust, it certainly did its best to heighten it.

231 Hatch 340-1.
232 Terraine, 153.

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The first such attempt was the Bengal partition, ostensibly made on administrative grounds but really to subdue the Bengalis. The Muslims supported it, and a Hindu-Muslim rift was imminent. The viceroy encouraged the Muslim opposition and assured the Muslims of looking after their interests. The Muslim League was established in 1906 to take up the Muslim cause. The British attitude to Turkey, however, brought the two communities together for a time, and the khilafat movement lent support to Gandhi's non-cooperation which started in 1920 and was abruptly withdrawn two years later. The frustration which followed led to serious Hindu-Muslim riots. In the Congress itself there was a split, one group wanting to take part in the administration and so proceed on to dominion status, and the other group in favour of working for it by 'uniform continuous and consistent obstruction.' Jinnah, who dominated Muslim politics at this time, was a close associate of Gandhi in 1920-21, and the two got on very well together. But after Jinnah was released from jail in 1923 he begain to oppose the Congress. In 1929 the Muslim League expressed itself against the Nehru Report which declared independence and not dominion status as the goal for India. The Report had urged a unitary government, abolition of separate electorates, reservations for minorities in legislative bodies strictly in proportion to numbers, and the creation of three new provinces where Muslims were in majority. The League wanted a federation, separate electorates, and retention of the number of seats already granted by the 1919 Act. Jinnah charged Congress of attempting to establish Hindu rule. Anyway, the Nehru Report fell through. When civil disobedience was restarted many Muslims kept away. Jinnah declared that while the Muslims were opposed to British domination, they did not want Hindu domination either; and they could not join a movement whose aim was not to achieve independence but to make 70 million Muslims dependents of the Hindu Mahasabha. Meanwhile Mohammed Iqbal, noted Muslim poet and philosopher, who presided over the 1930 session of the League at Allahabad, went much further than Jinnah in asking for a Muslim homeland. Welcoming 'communalism' in its higher aspects as 'indispensable', he emphatically said: 'The Muslim

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demand for the creation of a Muslim India within India' is 'perfectly justified.'[233] Iqbal even defined the homeland as a single state comprising of the Punjab, NWFP, Sind and Baluchistan.

The riots and disturbances in the wake of India's national struggle convinced the British government that consitutional reforms had to be introduced. There followed the series of Round Table Conferences and the resulting Government of India Act of 1935. Elections were held, and the Congress swept the polls. With victory came vanity, and the Congress thought it could ditch the League. That was tragic : 'What a glorious thing must be a victory, Sir.' 'The greatest tregady in the world, Madam, except a defeat.'[234]

By now the League was not a force to be ignored or flouted. The desertion of the Congress drove most Muslims Leagueward. The 1940 Pakistan Resolution clinched the issue so far as Jinnah was concerned. Defining 'Pakistan' Choudhry Rahmat Ali, a writer, explained that it meant P for Punjab, A for Afghania (NWFP), K for Kashmir, I for Iran, S for Sind (including Kutch and Kathiawar), T for Turkharistan, and AN for Afghanistan and Baluchistan. These, the Choudhry said 'are names of all our homelands, Indian and Asian—the land of the Paks, i.e. the spiritually clean.'[235] In the years to come two points began to be constantly pressed by Jinnah. First, that the League should be regarded as the only body representing the Muslims, and second, Pakistan first, independence afterwards. Both these demands were opposed by the Congress. As for the first it said, the League can't be considered as the sole representative of the Muslims. Look at the Muslims we've got on the Congress. For independence, it said 'yes' ; but no Pakistan. Once free we will have no trouble in solving our minority problems. And that was how Mountbatten found it.

233 Christine E. Dobbin, *Basic Documents in the Development of Modern India and Pakistan, 1835-1947*, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1970, p. 98, *op. cit.*

234 S. Rogers, *Recollections*, 1859, p. 215, fn.

235 Dorothy Norman (ed.) *Nehru*, Asia, 1965, Vol. 2, p. 224.

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Let's Hammer Out a Solution Quick

With things as they were, Mountbatten was convinced that Pakistan was the only way. Another thing he came to be sure of was that it had to be sooner than he had given Attlee to think, for, with tempers rising day by day, by June 1948 there might remain, he thought, no solution at all, only chaos. It was a sad decision for him, for he had always, unlike his predecessors, preferred a united India. 'So there it was:' he recorded, 'our dream of handing on a united India had vanished. Now there would have to be two Indias—and they would have to come into being long before June 1948.'[236] But Mountbatten could only have an onlooker's interest in Indian fortunes. It was more difficult to convert those to partition who would have to bear its consequences, and to whom it was anathema. He had already side-tracked Gandhi who, having failed to impress an aghast Congress with his exasperating proposal to ask Jinnah to form a government, had gone off to Bihar to keep Hindus and Muslims from flying at each other's throats. An agreement behind his back was easier, and now Sardar Patel and Nehru put through a proposal for 'the partition of... Punjab into two communal states, Muslim and Hindu, with freedom to the Sikhs to choose in which community they would live and work.' In some way Patel and Nehru hoped that Jinnah would not agree to such a division, and in any case, as Nehru wrote in explanation to Gandhi, 'this is the only answer to the partition as demanded by Jinnah'.[237] Mountbatten at once seized the opportunity, and called Patel. After a brief talk he got him to admit not only that what the Congress had passed was almost an admission of Pakistan, but also that it was perhaps the best solution. There remained Nehru to convince.

Mosley seems to bring out that Nehru's conversion was affected by a kind *gherao*[238] of him by Mountbatten's family

236 Terraine, 152.
237 Mosley, 101.
238 Surrounding of someone from all sides.

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and cortege, and that he capitulated to their charms.[239] This is obviously an exaggeration. It was Mountbatten's closeness to people—all people, not merely Nehru—that marked him out from other viceroys. It was partly his nature, and partly his technique. He himself acknowledged this. 'Once again' he said 'I could see that everything was going to depend upon personal relationships. If I could build up an atmosphere of trust and understanding with the key figures I might succeed. If I could not do that I knew I hadn't a hope.'[240] Even before he accepted his assignment as viceroy he had informed Attlee that although he proposed to uphold the dignity of the viceroyalty, he and Edwina intended 'to visit Indian leaders and Indian people in their homes.' And Attlee had thoroughly approved.[241] Of course since he and Edwina knew Nehru from before, one would naturally expect them to be closer to each other than the rest. And it was not only with Nehru. There was the controversial photograph of Mahatma Gandhi resting his hand on Edwina's shoulder, which evoked such furore and indignation in England, where they were so zealously preserving what they were vigorously trying to abolish in India! In fact it would be foolish to think that such a thoughtful patriot as Nehru would make a momentous decision merely for the sake of preserving a friendship. He was certainly friendly with the Mountbattens. But if he had sincerely felt that he should not yield on Pakistan, he would not. Another thing which does not appear convincing is that Nehru was 'tired', implying thereby that he gave up because of that. This is not possible for a man whose favourite lines were :

'The woods are lovely, dark and deep
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.'[242]

239 Mosley 102-5.
240 Terraine, 149.
241 Hatch, 333.
242 The lines are from Robert Frost. After Nehru's death they were found on his working desk, copied in his own hand.

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That he acknowledged to his biographer nine year after, that they were all tired out in 1947, does not mean he accepted Pakistan because of that. He also told his biographer 'But if Gandhi had told us not to, we would have gone on fighting and waiting.'[243] Then why *was* Pakistan accepted by him? It was a combination of misfortune, error and inevitability.[244] The misfortune was that just at this moment Nehru and Patel had jointly estranged Gandhi by getting the Punjab partition approved by the Congress. Unlike Nehru, Gandhi never spoke much, but he must have taken it to heart as a stab in the back. And then, apart from justifying the whole thing by lame excuses, which Gandhi would surely have seen through, they never even cared to make up with him. Thus just at this critical moment, when they needed it most, they were bereft of his salutary guidance. It was just destiny shaping the end. And the decision was certainly a mistake even though made with sincerity. '600,000 were dead, 14,000,000 driven from their homes, 100,000 young girls kidnapped by both sides, forcibly converted or sold on the auction block'[245]—was a disturbingly heavy price for partition, not to speak of the bitter memories which lived on. A mistake is something which can be made by the wisest of men, as the sage Tulsidasa says: 'Then Lord Mahadeva smiled and said: call no man wise or foolish. Even as the Lord Rama wills so does a man that very instant become.'[246] Finally there was the inevitability. Pakistan had become by now something irretractable. The Muslims were solidly behind Jinnah, and both he and they wanted Pakistan and nothing short of it. It was their pound of flesh, and they thought they must have it even if it meant copious

243 2—Mosley, 248.

244 A view has been expressed that conditions had become so bad that Pakistan was the only alternative to choose (see D.V. Tahmankar, *Sardar Patel*, Allen and Unwin, 1970, p. 272). It cannot be denied there were serious communal riots, but this was nothing new. Most of the chaos came *after* partition, not before. Partition was not the consequence of one mistake but a series of them, and to a large extent it was brought about with the connivance of the British.

245 Mosley 244.

246 *Ramacharitramanas, Balakanda*, 124 (A).

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shedding of blood. The Daniel who had come to judgement had decided on giving Jinnah his pound of flesh and he was not one bit concerned how it was given. Pakistan could have been tactfully avoided twenty years back, but now it was too late.

Lord Mountbatten managed to produce a plan in just three weeks and sent it to London for approval. The British government made certain amendments. But Nehru, whom the viceroy showed it in confidence, said it wouldn't do, so a new formula was found out and approved. Attlee announced it in the House of Commons. The Indian Independence Act of 18 July 1947 was made applicable from 15 August 1947. It would bring into existence two new independent Dominions known respectively of India and Pakistan. Pakistan would consist of East Bengal and West Punjab, Sind, the Chief Commissioner's Province of British Baluchistan and NWFP ; provided that in the case of the last named one, if the majority of the valid votes cast in a referendum opted for Pakistan. The rest of British India (excluding the territories forming Pakistan) would consist of the territory of India. The legislatures of each of the new Dominions would have full power to make laws for that Dominion, including laws having extra-territorial operation. As an interim measure the laws of British India would apply to the respective Dominions till such time as new ones were framed. The princely states would in theory become independent. but they would accede to one or the other of the new Dominions. All governmental assets including the armed forces, the civil service and the police, would be divided between the Dominions. In disputed areas a Boundary Commission would draw up the actual frontiers.

Having made his plan Mountbatten went on to get the assent of everyone who mattered. With some he pleaded and cajoled, with others he took a hard line. Gandhi was against it all to the last, but somehow he felt defeated, knowing that his lone stand could hardly prevent partition. Yet he alone, among all others, and that includes Mountbatten—really visualised all its horrors. Sadly he said, 'everyone today is impatient for independence. Congress has practically decided to accept partition. They have been handed a wooden loaf in this new plan. If they

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eat it they die of colic if they leave it they starve.'[247] He made a last effort and landed up at Delhi, much to Mountbatten's consternation. But it was no good. 'I have come to Delhi to fight a losing battle' he said despairingly, as he got down from the train. When he met Mountbatten it was his day of silence so he wrote a message pathetically on a bit of paper 'You don't really want me to say anything, doy ou?'[248] Mountbatten couldn't have agreed more. There were the princes left to tackle. Mountbatten's biographers have praised his performance in getting round them and obtaining 562 signatures to the accession from 565 rulers (only 3 dissenting). Mosley who is usually critical of the viceroy says it was 'the most spectacular example of Mountbatten's skill, charm and tremendous arts of persuasion.'[249] Admiringly they praise him for his banter with the dewan (prime minister) who pleaded lack of instructions from his ruler (a perfectly genuine objection). But the weapons he chose from his armoury were not charm and persuasion. They were rather intimidation and deceit. 'I warned them solemnly against any thought of resorting to arms,' he said. 'I told them they could not run away from the new Dominion governments which were going to be their neighbours. They would have to live with them.'[250] No wonder one ruler had a heart attack after signing, and another (Baroda) was in hysterics.[251] The rulers, the prop of the British Empire, and bedecked with regal splendour themselves, fully, understood that when a viceroy said they were to do something, it had got to be done. Mosley speaks of their disappointment too. 'The expression on the face of even the richest of them was the sad, lost look of men in defeat. They had come to the meeting convinced that the viceroy was going to save them and their privileges After all, he was one of them, wasn't he?'[252] It was trust betrayed and a ninety year old promise broken: 'We hereby announce to the native princes of India, that all treaties and engagements

247 Mosley 128.
248 Ibid 129.
249 Mosley 171.
250 Terraine. 156.
251 Hatch, 346.
252 Mosley, 172.

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made with, by, or under the authority of the East India Company are by us accepted, and will be scruplously maintained, and we look for the like observance on their part.'[253] Then there was Mountbatten's other weapon—deceit. The princes had been given to understand that the new Dominions would exercise control only on defence, external affairs and communications, and not on internal autonomy or sovereignty. Mountbatten had made Patel agree to this. Soon, however, they were forced to completely surrender. Sir Conrad Corfield, a champion of the princes observed, not without justification 'For the viceroy to use his influence, built upon the past exercise of paramountcy' in order to persuade trusting Rulers to accept such dubious propositions was, to say the least, un-British.[254] Hatch quotes the laughing Indians in the viceroy's solemn Chamber of Princes as saying, 'Mountbatten not only charms birds off the trees, but princes off their thrones.'[255] He didn't exactly charm them off though, he rather pulled them down. And he must have loved doing it too, for to him always they were a 'bunch of nitwits.[256] He also rubbed salt in their wounds when he later said 'I felt particularly responsible for all matters affecting the princes.'[257]

With a speed that staggered Attlee, who had small hope that I-day would come even in June the next year as Mountbatten had stipulated, Indian independence came with a bang on 15 August 1947. There were glorious tributes and accounts by the British who brought it about and the Indians who got it. Mountbatten's Boswell wrote:

> 'I could see the Mountbattens standing up, waving to the crowd which was cheering and waving back at them. Nehru made some last frantic efforts to call for order and clear a little space, but his pleas were in vain, so there was no alternative but for Mountbatten to stay in his carriage, and

253 Queen Victoria's Proclamatlon to the Princes, Chiefs and Peoples of India, 1 Nov. 1858.
254 Mosley, 173, *op. cit.*
255 Hatch, 347.
256 Ibid.
257 Terraine, 162.

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while the flag was being hoisted, to take the salute from there.

'Just as the flag was unfurled light rain began to fall, and a rainbow appeared in the sky, matching the saffron, white and green of the flag...it would seem to provide a dramatic omen to refute the gloomier astrologers.'[258]

What Campbell-Johnson forgot to mention, though he must have noticed it, was there was also red in the rainbow.

Here is Hatch : 'Say what you will. Try to be detached and critical ; yet you must recognise that it was a strange and marvellous and moving thing that the bitterness of forty years of revolution, repression, intrigue, and bloodshed should culminate in that scene of love for the man who represented the British King. Stranger that he could bring the British Empire to its end neither with the bang of cannon nor a whimper of dismay, but with half a millions Indians shouting "Mountbatten *ki Jai.*" '[259] Since Hatch appears to imply right in the beginning that this isn't a detached or a critical view, there would be absolutely no harm in revelling, for a moment in sentiment. And here is Mountbatten himself : 'It was a day of enormous rejoicing—the fulfilment of millions of dreams. It was a day of unbelievable goodwill. All the animosities between Indians and British which had grown up over decades seemed to melt away. It was wonderful to be carried along on the wave of friendship.'[260]

Which sounds much like: God's in his heaven and all is right with India. But there were hundreds of millions who did not share Mountbatten's wonderful feeling ; to whom August 15 was a day of damnation ; who lost relatives friends and property. History keeps no record of *them.*

For Gandhi it was a day of mourning and introspection. He had tried his best to avoid partition, and having failed he was now engaged in healing its wounds 'in a noisome slum.'

Jawaharlal Nehru said : At the stroke of the midnight hour,

258 Alan Campbell-Johnson, *Mission With Mountbatten*, Robert Hale, 1951, p. 161.
259 Hatch, 351.
260 Terraine, p. 158.

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when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance.'

It all sounded very well, as indeed it was meant to be ; but while India awoke to life and freedom, many in it did not awake to anything at all. They slept the sleep of death on street, pavement, temple and mosque.

Mountbatten sums up his own achievement in India, in his televised biography :

> 'I loved India and I had always done my best to serve the people of the whole sub-continent. It had been a great disappointment to find, in 1947, that there was no way of keeping it united. Partition was a blow to every lover of India...But I could look into my own conscience without dismay. From first to the last I had done my utmost to serve the true interests of Britain and India—the whole of India.'[261]

Attlee was overjoyed at Mountbatten's having pulled it off. 'In my opinion no other man could have carried out this tremendous task,' he said.[262] The Conservatives were censorious. They blamed him for the disorder and the loss of life which followed partition. To all this Mountbatten was indifferent. 'History will be the judge,'[263] he said. What should one take as the judgment of history?

The Defects of the Settlement

The charges against Mountbatten can be summarised as as follows :

1. Why did he hasten a settlement ?

261 Terraine, p. 165.
262 Hatch, p. 361.
263 Terraine, p. 166.

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2. Why did he agree to partition when, as he himself said, it did not appeal to him.
3. Why were there delays in vital matters like dividing the army and announcing the Boundary Commission Award ?
4. Why were no arrangements made to prevent the disorder and bloodshed which followed the making of India and Pakistan ?

Mountbatten took over as viceroy of British India on 24 March 1947 and announced the date of creation of India and Pakistan as 15 August 1947 i.e. in less than five months. When he started from England he had insisted that the British should pull out, no matter whether agreement was reached or not, by June 1948.[264] 'Too soon,' Churchill had remarked when the date was announced in the House of Commons. The reason he gave for changing his mind suddenly (apparently he had the feeling for urgency soon after 28 April when he went to Peshawar), was given by him as 'civil war in its worst form'[265] and 'rising communal bitterness'.[266] Communal bitterness was nothing new. It had been going on right through the Muslim rule in India, was present when the British changed places with them, and continued steadily thereafter. A year or so more of it could hardly make any difference. As for civil war it had not happened, unless Mountbatten mistook rioting for civil war, and it could have been said to have happened (though not in the form of a real civil war as took place in America) in a minor way *after* the announcement of partition. It would be more appropriate to call it communal frenzy. Mountbatten unfortunately put the cart before the horse. The 'civil war,' as he called it, was the *result* of partition, it could hardly be its cause. Why then the haste ? It would be difficult to give an answer, for any answer could well be wrong. His admirer, Alden Hatch, has defended him ably though not too well. Mountbatten's hurry was *not*

264 Hatch, 333.
265 Terraine, 152.
266 Hatch, 342.

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because he wanted to go back in time to resume his naval career, he says. If that was so he could easily have declined the governor generalship of free India, 'gone on 16 August 1947, instead of remaining until 21 June 1948.'[267] Sounds very convincing that, but ignores the Mountbatten ego. Hatch himself relates how when Jinnah hurried to occupy his accustomed seat of honour as President of the Assembly at Karachi, Mountbatten stopped him with smiling determination. 'After all Mr Jinnah, I am still viceroy and the representative of His Majesty the King.'[268] For a man of Mountbatten's temperament the governor generalship of free India would be too tempting an assignment to spurn. He would be making history, which he always aspired to make. The naval career could wait for some time. In any case he had started from England with the idea of being out in India till June 1948. But he could not have known all this while he was rushing through the partition. Only Mountbatten himself knew what the real reason was, and all that one can say is that if he thought it was an impending civil war, as he said, it was a mistake of judgment. For a man of Mountbatten's perspicuity it becomes rather difficult to believe that he made such a mistake. If one were to hazard a guess it might be the same reason that Mosley attributes to Nehru. With his 'eighteen to twenty hours a day'[269] he was soon tired. And all of it was in the gruelling heat of an Indian summer which must be taking its toll, even though Mosley insists that 'Delhi's furnace acted like a blow-torch on his skin and galvanised him into activity.'[270] His cool patience even in the face of provocation, which charmed and won over hostile Indian leaders, must have been made possible only by an inner effort of restraint, which would add to his tiredness. At some stage of his endeavours he must have thought 'to hell with it; let me deliver a plan and be off'. He stayed as governor general, it is true, and again in India's gruelling heat, but as Shakespeare says 'The labour we delight in physicai

267 Hatch, 359.
268 Ibid, 348.
269 Hatch, 338.
270 Mosley, 93.

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pain.'[271] All that the British government was concerned with was to leave India as soon as possible, or else perhaps they felt they would be massacred and not leave at all. '*Whatever happens*' Attlee had said, 'our rule is ending on that date.'[272] And Mountbatten observed in retrospect 'what really did anything matter to the Indian except independence ?'[273]

The second point is, why did Mountbatten at all accept partition when initially he felt it was not right ? The genesis of partition has already been related. When it actually came it was a cruel thing. We can consider this question in two portions, viz. the British attitude towards partition and the attitude of Indians to it. While the British realized early that in India it was essential to give some kind of protection to the minorities, they thought along the lines of an All India Federation in which they would be given adequate representation. The Cabinet Mission which preceded Mounbatten's settlement were positively against partition. After considering all the issues involved they concluded : 'We are therefore unable to advise the British government that the power which at present resides in British hands should be handed over to two entirely separate sovereign states.'[274] This was in the middle of May 1946, while by the end of April 1947 Mountbatten had determined to have partition. Why this sudden change in policy in just a year ? Mountbatten's predecessor, Wavell, had always been more inclined to Jinnah and the Muslim League. Jinnah himself had stayed on in London when he went to attend the conference there in December 1946, and had strengthened his position.[275] After the Simla Conference a member of Wavell's executive council had sent a secret message to Jinnah

271 1—*Macbeth*, ii, iii, 54.

272 Francis Williams, *A Prime Minister Remembers*, Heinemann, 1961, p. 210 (Italics mine).

273 Mosley, 229.

274 Statement by Cabinet Mission and His Excellency the Viceroy, (md.) 6821 (1946), C.H. Philips, *Select Documents*, Oxford, 1962, p. 381.

275 *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bhavan, 1969, Vol. XI, p. 754.

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that if he stepped out of the talks he would be rewarded with Pakistan.[276] Partition was an understanding between Jinnah and the British. And when the British left they virtually gave India a parting kick. Besides the British government wanted a quick solution. 'The sands' as Attlee said 'were running out',[277] and the British were keen to get away as early as possible. Thus partition was accepted as the earliest and quickest solution, despite the weighty arguments of the Cabinet Mission against it. The British couldn't care less, so long as they were rid of India. The plan Mountbatten finally got through was, as Mosley points out, drawn up by V.P. Menon in exactly four hours, and accepted by Attlee and his cabinet in a meeting which lasted just five minutes.[278]

Of the Indians, Jinnah of course, was Pakistan's architect, though he did not live on to enjoy it. He stuck doggedly to Pakistan and, like the Importunate Widow in Jesus's parable, ultimately got it.[279] Gandhi kept opposing it to the end. Pakistan, over my dead body, he said. But with most of his followers deserting him, he could do little to prevent it. Azad's was the only downcast face in the Independence day celebrations. 'I must confess' he said 'that the very term Pakistan goes against my grain. It suggests that some portions of the world are pure while others are impure. Such a division of territories into pure and impure is un-Islamic and a repudiation of the very spirit of Islam...As a Muslim I for one am not prepared for a moment to give up my right to treat the whole of India as my domain and to share in the shaping of its political and economic life. To me it seems a sure sign of cowardice to give up what is my patrimony and content myself with a mere fragment of it.'[280] Nehru soon got converted to the two nation theory. Many reasons have been advanced for it. But whether it was the charm of the Mountbattens, or lure of office, or his tiredness and being out of touch with the

276 Durga Das, India, *From Curzon to Nehru & After*, Collins, 1969, p. 261.
277 C.R. Attlee, *As It Happened*, Heinemann, 1954, p. 184.
278 Mosley, p. 126.
279 *Luke*, 18 : 1-5.
280 Mosley, 22.

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people, or lack of Gandhi's guidance (which he himself didn't take), or his disgust at the communal frenzy, or simply his conviction that it was the only possible course ; it was doubtless the mistake of a lifetime—a mistake moreover which could never be set right. Given in haste and repented at leisure, Pakistan was a monument to British diplomacy and Indian short-sightedness. It was the Trojan Horse dragged away joyfully by the people of India. But inside it there was death and destruction.

The spirit of senseless hurry permeated the Boundary Commission also which was sent under Sir Cyril Radcliffe to fix the boundaries between India and Pakistan. Attlee had a brief sympathetic remark on his achievement : 'We sent out Lord Radcliffe to fix the boundaries. We couldn't have had anyone better, but of course, anybody who attempts to fix boundaries anywhere offends everybody : a thankless task.'[281] Besides being thankless, it was a task next to impossible. He got only five weeks for what would normally take years. The Indian judges not only did not co-operate, they intrigued as well.[282] Radcliffe did not have authoritative maps. The brief he had been given was vague. It said 'other factors' were to be taken account of in partitioning, but did not say what these factors were. Sir Cyril arrived on 8 July 1947 and rushed through his award by 9 August, deciding the fate of 28,000,000 people. He had worked under very adverse conditions. 'After a few days of it,' he wrote, 'I seriously began to wonder whether I would come out of it alive. I have thought ever since that the greatest achievement which I made as Chairman of the Boundary Commission was a physical one, in surviving.'[283] The Punjab governor, Jenkins, asked Mountbatten to announce the award before 15 August to stop panic, so that people at least knew what was India and what was Pakistan. But the announcement was not made until two days

281 Francis Williams, *A Prime Minister Remembers*, Heinemann, 1961 p. 211.

282 There were 8 High Court Judges as members for Bengal and Punjab, four for each, of which two represented Congress and two the League.

283 Mosley, 197.

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after independence. Although by May 1947 it had been made clear that there would be partition, no plans were made for dividing the army till June, only six weeks before the deadline. The Boundary Commission was appointed more than a month after partition had been decided on. All these were blunders which, with a little foresight, could be avoided.

Then there was the terrible aftermath of partition with its hair-raising horrors. Men shot their own daughters to save them from fate worse than death. Trains arrived with blood-spattered compartments and closely packed corpses, and the usual slips pasted outside. 'A Present to India' or 'A Present to Pakistan.' Tamerlane would have quailed to learn of what they did with women and children. 'If they were children, they were picked up by the feet and their heads smashed against the walls. If they were female children they were raped. If they were girls, they were raped and then their breasts were chopped off. And if they were pregnant, they were disembowelled.'[284] And meanwhile in Delhi there was loud jubilation. Men danced with joy and crowds cheered wildly with full throated abandon, '*Jai Hind* !' 'Mountbatten *ki Jai* !' and Nehru-Mountbatten *ek hon* !' An old Congress worker, K.M. Munshi, wrote : 'No power in history but Great Britain would have conceded independence with such grace and no power but India would have so gracefully acknowledged the debt.'[285] But was independence, which meant the creation of Pakistan and the ruin of numberless families of Hindus and Muslims, really a day of rejoicing ? Far away in mourning in Noakhali, in a dark slum, Mahatma Gandhi, the real lover of India, knew better. There is a story of how a famous king was faced one day by two women, each claiming that a child was hers. 'All right' said the discerning monarch 'cut him up into two, give one half to one and the other half to the other.' One of the women pleaded with tears in her eyes, 'No, no, Your Majesty ! let *her* (the other woman) have him.' Then the king knew the child was her's, and he let her take him.So had Gandhi pleaded with Mountbatten about India. Let Jinnah have her, he had

284 Mosley, 243.
285 Mosley, 242, *op. cit.*

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said, but do not cut her up in two. Doubtless Mountbatten, the Congress, and everyone else, thought the Mahatma an old crank who was a little wrong the head. But Gandhi had spoken in the same spirit as that woman. Not without reason do we call him 'Father of the Nation.'

'History will be the judge' Mountbatten had told his Conservative critics in the House of Commons when they disparaged his achievement. Jawaharlal Nehru paid him a high tribute when he said that his reputation had not foundered as those of many others before him, and that 'we learned much from you. We gathered confidence when sometimes we were rather shaken.' Another Indian said 'At last, after two hundred years, the British have conquered India.' Unfortunately history cannot judge. It is the historians who judge. History only narrates. At best we can form our opinions from events, but they remain individual views. From what we have narrated, it would seem that (despite Mr Munshi's compliment),[286] if Pakistan had to come, it could have come with greater grace, with more order, and with much less misery and bloodshed. And it could have been done, if only Mountbatten had not hung his special calender on the wall. Of all the aspects of partition, the large scale slaughter and brutality are the most deplorable and the least excusable, particularly when Mountbatten had been warned by his subordinate officer of such a possibility. True he had sent the Boundary Force to the Punjab, but it turned out to be completely inadequate. No preventive measures were taken. Were it not for Gandhi's wonderful feat (Mountbatten acknowledged it by calling him 'the One-Man Boundary Force'), the horrors of the Punjab would have been enacted in Bengal also. When Azad had drawn Mountbatten's attention to the possibility of 'rivers of blood flowing,' the viceroy had said :

> 'At least on this question I shall give you complete assurance. I shall see to it that there is no bloodshed and

286 See *ante*. He had said 'No power in history but Great Britain would have conceded independence with such grace, and no power but India would have so gracefully acknowledged the debt.'

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riot... . I will order the army and the air force to act and I will order tanks and aeroplanes to suppress anybody who wants to create trouble.'[287]

The performance belied the promise. Azad had been right. Rivers of blood did flow, and for Mountbatten who had seen many wars, who, as he himself claimed was 'a soldier not a civilian', it was indeed a shame.

The festivities of the new Pakistan began on the fourteenth, and Mountbatten flew to Karachi to convey his and the British King's greetings. 'I never thought it would happen,' Jinnah said, 'I never expected to see Pakistan in my lifetime.'[288] He had reason indeed for his surprised exuberance. Pakistan was his own child. Independence was the culmination of years of bitter struggle for many Indian leaders, but a triumph only for one—Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah.

The First Governor General of Free India

Mountbatten remained governor general of free India from after the declaration of Indian independence till 21 June 1948. During this brief period he was largely occupied in solving the problems which independence itself had created. In his broadcast to the nation on independence day, Nehru had emphasised the problems facing free India. Production he gave first priority, but with equitable distribution. Then followed 'rapid and radical reform of the land tenure system.'[289] But little did he realise that for moment the problem would be law and order, not development. Pakistan's ministers had thoroughly condemned the belated Radcliffe award as 'abominable' and 'one-sided.' They did not relish Gurdaspur going to the Indian side as it was the only land link between India and Kashmir. The *Dawn*, official organ of the Muslim League, threatened that 'even if the government accepts the territorial murder of

287 1—Mosley, 129-30, 210.
288 Mosley 239, *op. cit.*
289 1—Michael Brecher, *Nehru A Political Biography*, Oxford, 1959, p. 358 (referred to hereafter as 'Brecher').

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Pakistan, the people will not'. Thus incited, the people vented their rage on the fleeing Hindus, who began to trek towards Delhi. There was a chain reaction, and soon the trouble spread to the capital. By 5 September 2000,000 'refugees', as they came to be called, had arrived in Delhi. By the end of September more than two million people were on the move.[290] Soon there were twelve million, and before the year ended half a million had died or were killed.[291]

The Indian leaders felt the situation to be beyond their control and V.P. Menon phoned Mountbatten who was in Simla to return immediately to deal with it. When Mountbatten asked him whether it couldn't be a day or two later, Menon told him that in that case he needn't bother for by that time there would be no central government![292] Mountbatten proposed an Emergency Committee, and Nehru and Patel insisted that he should be the chairman. The Committee. which superseded the cabinet for the time being, consisted of those cabinet ministers who were concerned with law and order, refugee rehabilitation and allied matters. It met every day in the morning and the decisions were implemented by afternoon the same day. Disagreement cropped up between Nehru and Patel, Nehru wanted a ban on all weapons including the *Kirpans* of the Sikhs. Patel dissented saying it would go against religious freedom. Nehru had a soft corner for Indian Muslims, Patel had animosity. There was disagreement over economic issues also, as in the case of decontrol of prices of essential commodities. There was more spitting up in the Congress due to the resignation of Kriplani from the presidentship. The Socialists proposed Jayaprakash Narayan or Acharya Narendradeva. Nehru supported the move but Patel opposed it. The crisis blew over for the moment with the election of Rajendra Prasad.

290 Michael Edwardes, *Nehru, A Political Biography*, Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1971, pp. 218-9 (Referred to hereafter as 'Edwardes').

291 Brecher, 363.

292 Percival Spear, *The Oxford History of India*, Oxford, 1978, p. 405.

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Indo-Pakistan Relations

Although many of the issues between the newly formed dominions began in Mountbatten's governor generalship and continued after he left, the events will be narrated here in their entirety for continuity's sake.

1. *The Indian States and Paramountcy.* The expansion of the British empire in India had proceeded at a fast pace before the revolt of 1857, by conquest and annexations. The last annexation was that of Oudh in 1856. British India consisted of the various provinces in which the Raj ruled directly, and in addition there were about 562 states of various shapes and sizes ranging from Hyderabad, which was as large as France, to the smallest, no bigger than Monaco. All together these states comprised 45.3 per cent of the surface of India and were inhabited by 99 million people. The British government imposed its authority on these, not directly as in the case of the provinces, but through the rulers, by means of a variety of treaties, engagements and sanads and in some cases even usages and sufferances. In the beginning, through the period which Lee-Warner[293] calls the Ring Fence (1757-1813), treaties made with the states were on the basis of equality. The absolute authority of the ruler over his subjects was guaranteed, and no claim made to intervene in the affairs of the states. Lord Hastings, whose cherished desire was to build up an empire in India, wrote : 'Our object ought to be to render the British government paramount in effect, if not declaredly so'. But while he insisted on the surrender of the states's external sovereignty, their sovereignty in the internal sphere was maintained. Hastings's successors eroded internal sovereignty as well, by appointing British Residents in the states who became virtual rulers themselves. Thereafter every opportunity was taken, particularly by the arch-annexationist Dalhousie, to net more and more states. This period (1813-58) was what Lee-Warner called that of 'subordinate isolation.'

When the Company rule ended, and India came under the

293 Sir William Lee-Warner, *The Native States of India*, Macmillan, 1910.

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Crown, the Queen's proclamation of 1858 gave the princes the assurance that the treaties and engagements made with them by the Company would continue. Of the 562 states 109 were those, the rulers of which were members of the Chamber of Princes in their own right, and 126 were represented in it by twelve elected members. These states had 'in greater or less degree, political power, legislative, executive and judicial, over their subjects.'[294] The remaining 327 were estates, jagirs and so forth. These states were not British territory. Each had its own system of administration and its own laws, and the ruler of the state was the source of all authority. The bigger states exercised sovereignty to the fullest measure, the smaller ones with certain minor restrictions.

The relation of the British Crown to the Indian states was not quite precisely defined. It was claimed that even though the states had sovereignty to greater extent or less, the Crown was, in respect of them, paramount. The British justification for paramountcy was given by Sir Henry Maine who distinguished between sovereignty and independence. Sovereignty, he said, was divisible, but independence was not. Sovereignty could be called 'partial independence'. 'There is only one independent sovereign' Maine said, 'and that is the British government.' Lord Finlay elaborated this stand by saying that it was quite consistent with sovereignty that the sovereign may in certain respects be dependent upon another power, as for example in the control of foreign affairs.[295] Now all this is pure hair-splitting. For there cannot be either partial independence or restricted sovereignty. The British saw no way of interfering with the sovereignty of the states, and yet they wanted to interfere. In order to place restrictions on the states without taking the blame of arbitrarily encroaching on their domain, they tried to create a distinction where there was none at all.

The restrictions they placed were substantial ones, which in fact made a mockery of the so-called 'sovereignty' of the states. The states could not make war or conclude peace, communicate or negotiate with foreign powers, cede, sell or exchange portions

294 M.K. Varadarajan, *The Indian States and the Federation*, Oxford, 1939, p. 4.

295 Ibid p. 7.

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of their territory or settle any disputes among themselves. Although some of the states had their own armies, railways, telegraphs, post, coinage and so forth, they were asked to cooperate with the Crown in the defence of India in the manner in which the British government desired. This of course provided the lever for interference in internal affairs, and the right of the 'Paramount Power' to such interference was made more specific with the condition that the Government of India could step in to set right 'such serious abuses in native government as may threaten any part of the country with anarchy or disturbance'. Even confiscation of the state could be resorted to in extreme cases. The opening of the Crown rule was marked by granting of sanads to the states. Although the royal proclamation had guaranteed the treaties and engagements made with the states 'by or under the authority of the Honourable East India Company', the British government knew they were skating on thin ice. The English Company was formed under a charter given in December 1600 by Queen Elizabeth and its scope was merely trade. It did not have any paramount powers as regards administration. What it did not have, could not pass to the Crown. In order to convince the princes, who in any case were mostly too weak and indifferent to assert themselves, the British gave them sanads, which were superfluous if the treaties and engagements were good enough. With the same object they made them trudge unwillingly to grand durbars to venerate the non-existent Paramount Power, and receive visible proof of it through high sounding titles. The Crown committed itself 'to maintain unimpaired the privileges rights and dignities' of the princes, and granted protection against 'attempts to eliminate them and to substitute another form of government.'[296] The right to paramountcy claimed by the British was vigorously enforced in the period of the Crown administration. Intervention followed on various pretexts, like prevention of gross misrule as in the case of Baroda and Manipur, settling disputed successions, or even for imposing pro-British officers on senior

296 The Indian States Committee Report, 1929, Gwyer and Appadorai (ed.) Speeches and Documents on the Indian Constitution, 1921-47, Vol. II, p. 720.

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posts. In the case of Manipur, indeed, the ground of interference was that the subjects were committing rebellion in obeying the constituted authority of their ruler. This meant that the people of the states were ultimately responsible not to their ruler, but to the Paramount Power. Lord Curzon, who considered the princes to be 'a set of unruly and ignorant and rather indisciplined school-boys,' had undisguised contempt for them. He humiliated the princes by prohibiting them from using red liveries and taking permission of the British government before leaving their states.[297] Thus the princes were reduced to the stature of civil servants. While repeating the promises contained in the Queen's proclamation, Lord Minto reminded the rulers that 'the relationship of the Supreme Government to the states is one of suzerainty.[298]

Ever since reforms began to be envisaged by the British government, they began to play upon the princes's fears about the uncertainty of their position in a future federal union. Although some start with popular institutions had been made in states like Mysore and Travancore—a representative assembly was established in one and a legislative council in the other—most rulers were suspicious of these institutions, and feared they would go against their autocratic privileges. The British, who so long had been vindicating their own authority over the princes, now began to champion the princes's rights. It was obviously to pitch them against any move for throwing off the British yoke, a campaign which reached its zenith at the hands of Sir Conrad Corfield, political adviser, on the eve of Indian independence. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report observed :

'We wish to say that we think that the princes should be assured in the fullest and freest manner that no constitutional changes which may take place will impair the right, dignities and privileges secured to them by treaties, sanads, and engagements or by established practice.'[299]

297 Lord Curzon to Lord Hamilton, 29 August 1900. Hamilton Papers Vol. 17, No. 38.

298 Lord Minto's Speech at Udaipur, November 1909, Minto's Speeches (1905-10) 1911.

299 The Montagu-Chelmsford Report on the Furture of the States, 1918 (Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms).

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In much the same manner the Indian States Committee in its report of 1928-29 remarked : 'We hold that the treaties, engagements and sanads have been made with the Crown and that the relationship between the Paramount Power and the Princes should not be transferred, without the agreement of the latter, to a new government in British India responsible to an Indian legislature.'[300] The Cabinet Mission pursued the same line. If His Majesty's government ceased to exercise the powers of paramountcy, it said, these powers will return to the states. The states could then either enter into a federal relationship with the successor Government or Governments in British India or failing this enter into particular political arrangements with it or them.'[301] Sir Conrad Corfield tried his utmost to prevent the princes from joining the newly created dominions of India and Pakistan. He even went to London secretly to obtain the consent of Lord Listowel, the secretary of state for giving back 'paramountcy' to the Indian states ; in other words to incite them to keep away from the new governments. All this made the task of integration harder. But with Mountbatten's diplomacy and Sardar Patel's firmness, it was, despite British designs, accomplished.

The task of integrating the state in the face of Corfield's machinisation and the reluctance of the princes themselves, was exceedingly difficult. Mountbatten's famous meeting with them on 25 July 1947 doubtless did a lot.[302] Interspersed with humour and alternating with sympathy and firmness, it set them all laughing and crying at the same time, as with heavy hearts they signed. Nevertheless it was Patel who had prepared the ground. Having barely forty days at his disposal before 15 August the deadline for independence, he began to tackle them with the assistance of V.P. Menon, of whom Mountbatten had said 'he had one of the most statesman-like

300 The Nature of Paramountcy, C.H. Philips, *Select Documents*, Oxford, 1962, p. 433.

301 Memorandum presented by the Cabinet Mission to the Chancellor of the Chamber Princes, Cabinet Mission, 1946, C.H. Philips, *Select Documents*, Oxford, 1969, p. 435.

302 Mosley, 171.

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minds I have ever encountered.'[303] In order not to frighten the princes by too precipitate an approach, he appealed only for their joining the Indian Union for defence, foreign affairs and communications. The Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, the Nawab of Bhopal, who had been instigated by Corfield, had circulated a memorandum persuading the rulers to keep away. But Mountbatten's appeal had won them over, and the Maharajas of Bikaner, Patiala, Gwalior and Baroda were willing to join. Patel appealed to the rulers's sense of patriotism, and at the same time warned them that the alternative to accession was 'anarchy and chaos.' Patel played one state against another, approached them individually and collectively, till he got all, except three of them, in. These were Kashmir, Junagarh and Hyderabad, and their story will presently be told. Pakistan was all the time trying to create hurdles, for Jinnah would have been delighted to see the continuity of the Indian Union being upset by independent pockets. For example when the Maharaja of Jodhpur met him, Jinnah signed on a blank paper and gave it to him saying 'You fill in your conditions. I have already accepted them as you will see from my signature.' The Maharaja was tempted, but the Maharajkumar of Jaisalmer to whom he turned for advice told him, 'I would sign on one condition. If there is any Hindu-Muslim trouble, I will not side with the Muslims.'[304] That did it. The Maharaja realised his mistake, and acceded to India. The Maharaja of Indore was uncertain and had been prevailed upon by the Nawab of Bhopal not to sign. Meanwhile however the Nawab himself had signed on the sly, and when the document was shown to the Maharaja, he signed and wordlessly walked away. It was largely due to Patel's diplomacy that finally there emerged one united India with 5000,000 square miles of the state's territories on which lived 86 million people. Gandhi wrote : 'The task of dealing with

303 Alan Campbell—Johnson, *Mission With Mountbatten*, Robert Hale, 1951, p. 142.

304 D.V. Tahmankar, *Sardar, Patel*, Allen and Union, 1970, pp. 255-6 (Hereinafter referred to as 'Tahmankar').

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the princes was truly formidable, but I am convinced that the Sardar was the only man who could have coped with it'.[305]

2. *Kashmir.* Mountbatten had to deal with open warfare in Kashmir, which broke out in October 1947. In order to understand the situation, events which had taken place in Kashmir may briefly be narrated. The Dogra rule had not been progressive, and the autocratic nature of it was resented by the people. In 1929 the All India Congress Committee held its session at Lahore which was near Kashmir and the resolutions carried through made a profound impact on the Kashmiris. When the second civil disobedience movement was launched by Mahatma Gandhi in 1930, the oppressed Muslims rose under Sheikh Abdullah to fight for their rights, which included admission to the military and administrative services. The Maharaja set up a commission known as the Glancy Commission to investigate into the discontent and give its suggestions. But at the same time he got the agitation ruthlessly suppressed, after arresting all the leaders, including the Sheikh. The agitators 'were mowed down by the bullets of the State Dogra troops . . . but refused to turn back and received the bullets on their bared breasts.[306] The Glancy Commission recommended a consultative but not decision making legislative assembly. Meanwhile after his release Sheikh Abdullah founded in 1932 an All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference which, to begin with, admitted only Muslims, but was later widened to include all those who were prepared to carry on a national struggle. On 11 June 1939 the name of the body was changed to the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. The Muslim League was quick to sponsor a rival organisation which came to function as the Muslim Conference under Ghulam Abbas. Jinnah, who visited Kashmir in 1944, expressed his sympathy for the Muslim Conference. This widened the rift between Jinnah and Sheikh

305 1—Tahmankar, 237 *op. cit.*

306 Dr Jyoti Bhushan Das Gupta, *Indo-Pakistan Relations, 1947-1955*, Jaico, 1959, p. 85 *op. cit.* (Account of Sir Zafrullah Khan in the Security Council) (Hereinafter referred to as 'Das Gupta').

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Abdullah. Henceforth the tussle between the Congress and the Muslim League in India was more or less reflected in that between the National Conference and the Muslim Conference in Kashmir, Nehru and the Congress giving their support to the National Conference. Sheikh Abdullah was for nationalism socialism and secularism. He wanted representative government through a Constituent Assembly, adult universal suffrage and reservation for the minorities. In 1946 he started the Quit Kashmir movement through civil disobedience, and even appealed to the British Cabinet Delegation which had arrived in India. The Maharaja got the Sheikh arrested and convicted to a long term of imprisonment. The Muslim Conference initially co-operated with the Maharaja's administration but, inspired by the Muslim League, launched a Direct Action movement in September 1946. The Maharaja promptly arrested Ghulam Abbas also.

In January 1947 the Kashmir government held an election, which, because it was boycotted by the Nationalist Conference, went in absolute favour of the Muslim Conference, who were able to capture 16 out of 21 seats. This increased the tension between the two parties.

Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir found it difficult to decide whether he should join India or Pakistan. About 77 per cent of Kashmir's population was of Muslims, and about 20 per cent were Hindus. The rest accounted for Christians, Buddhists, tribals and others. The state had common frontiers with both Pakistan and India. If he acceded to India he might have to introduce representative government to which he was averse. If he joined Pakistan, being a Hindu they might dethrone him. Although the Congress was generally not in favour of native states declaring themselves independent, they put no pressure on Kashmir's joining India particularly. Mountbatten only advised the Maharaja to join one of the two dominions. Pakistan expected Kashmir to accede to their side. But the Maharaja decided to remain independent and wished to conclude 'Standstill Agreements' with both the dominions. Pakistan readily agreed to such an agreement, but not so India. Meanwhile there was trouble in Poonch, a principality across the Jhelum ruled by a Hindu Raja. According to Sheikh Abdullah

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'the people of Poonch, who suffered under their local ruler and again under the Maharaja of Kashmir, had started a people's movement for the redress of their grievances. It was not communal.'[307] When the Kashmir State troops were sent to quell the revolt, Muslim soldiers deserted and combined under the leadership of Sardar Mohammed Ibrahim and a Pakistani brigadier of the name of Akbar Khan better known as General Tariq. The Standstill Agreement of Kashmir with Pakistan was not working too well. There were many violations by Pakistan who cut off the supply of essential commodities, hindered free transit of travellers and harassed the Kashmiris in many other ways to somehow force the state to accede to Pakistan. The *Zamindar*, a Pakistani paper, wrote in an editorial 'Let us beleaguer Kashmir, let us do it so effectively that it may not be able to get out of our hands and seek refuge beyond the borders of our dominions. Kashmir and Jammu are parts of Pakistan. Their going out of Muslim domination will badly shatter the prestige of the Mussalmans.'[308] The 'K' of Pakistan stood for Kashmir, and with it gone the Muslim homeland would be incomplete.

On 21-22 October 1947 an all-out invasion of Kashmir was started by the Mahsud, Warir, and Afridi tribesmen who were led by Pakistani officers 'on leave'. The tribesmen captured Garhi, Domel Muzafarabad and, after taking over the Mahura power house which supplied electricity to Srinagar, pressed on to the capital itself. On the evening of 24 October the government of India received a desperate appeal from the Kashmir government. Mountbatten did not agree to send Indian troops till Kashmir acceded to India, for if he did Pakistan might send her troops, and it would precipitate war. The Maharaja, however, signed the instrument of accession to India on 26 October and it was accepted the next day.

The accession had been more or less forced on the Maharaja by Pakistan's badgering him and organising an attack on his kingdom. Now that it had been made, Pakistan began to fume over it. Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan said in

307 Das Gupta, 94 *op. cit.*
308 Das Gupta, 97 *op. cit.* (The *Zamindar*, 5 September 1947).

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a tirade: 'The accession of Kashmir to India is a much greater threat to the security of Pakistan. We do not recognise this accession. The accession of Kashmir to India is a fraud, perpetrated on the people of Kashmir by its cowardly ruler with the aggressive help of the government of India.'[309] In other words instead of seeking help to oppose the Pak led tribesmen, the 'cowardly ruler' should have been brave enough to let them finish their task. As regards the people of Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah's mind was bent on independence, rather than any partiality for India, as alleged by Pakistan's prime minister. 'Our first demand' the Sheikh said 'is complete transfer of power to the people of Kashmir. Representatives of the people in a democratic Kashmir will then decide whether the state should join India or Pakistan.'[310] It was Pakistan itself which by its aggression spurred on the Maharaja to accede to India. Jinnah's attitude can be gauged by his asking General Gracey, his commander-in-chief to rush troops to Srinagar. Gracey refused to give such an order without consulting Auchinleck, the Supreme Commander. Auchinleck, who arrived at Lahore on 28 October, told Jinnah that if he insisted on Pakistani troops attacking Kashmir even after it had acceded to India, all the British officers serving with the Pakistan army would resign.[311] This quietened Jinnah. The tribal insurrection having been suppressed by Indian forces on the request of the Maharaja of Kashmir, Mountbatten said it was his government's wish that as soon as law and order had been restored in Kashmir and her soil cleared of the invader, the question of the state's accession should be settled by a reference to the people. Such an undertaking was really unnecessary, once Kashmir had acceded, and it led to a long controversy which had no end. After opposing the plebiscite proposal for some time, Pakistan finally agreed to it. On 12 December 1947 Nehru informed Pakistan that India was willing to invite UN observers to 'advise us as to the proposed

309 Das Gupta, 103 *op. cit.*, *Dawn* 5 November 1947.

310 Das Gupta, 105 *op. cit.* (*People's Age* Communist Weekly of Bombay, 26 October 1947).

311 Ibid, 106.

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plebiscite.' Mountbatten was repeatedly advising UN help for mediation, as another incursion by the raiders into Kashmir could not be ruled out.

India's commitment to a plebiscite led to a series of complicated and inconclusive negotiations in the United Nations. On 1 January 1948 the government of India brought the issue to the Security Council. India's interest in Kashmir was vital because of its frontiers being contiguous with Soviet Russia and China, and because the caravan trade from Central Asia to India passed through it. Nevertheless India never exerted any pressure on Kashmir. Pakistan was of another mind. She started sending Muslim leaders to Kashmir to inflame Muslim feeling against Sikhs and Hindus. Raids were made from West Punjab (Pakistan) into Kashmir and Jammu in order to coerce non-Muslims. A rebellion in Poonch was stirred up by Pakistani arms, despite the Standstill Agreement, Pakistan imposed an economic blockade on Kashmir, stopping the supply of essential commodities. India could not help Kashmir much because of lack of good road links. It is not possible to go into the details of the discussions in the Security Council on the Kashmir case—it was hardly a 'dispute' as Pakistan insisted, because Kashmir had already signed the instrument of accession to India. The pre-conditions of plebiscite were cessation of hostilities and withdrawal of the armed forces. Despite many attempts to determine how these should be done, the UN could reach no solution. By a resolution of the Security Council (21 April, 1948) a five member Commission was surprised to find that three Pakistani brigades had been stationed in Kashmir right from May, and regular Pakistani forces were fighting there. This fact was considered by the Commission to have a material bearing on the situation. Meanwhile in September 1948 Jinnah died. The Indian army had also won spectacular success. These factors lessened the intensity of Pakistan's aggression, and a cease fire was effected on 1 January 1949, the cease fire line being demarcated by UN observers. But despite all attempts de-militarisation was never accomplished, and disagreement on fundamental points remained. India maintained that she was in Kashmir by right and Pakistan was there unauthorisedly. Pakistan insisted that Kashmir's accession was void and illegal,

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because firstly she could not sign any such instrument after having concluded a Standstill Agreement with Pakistan; secondly the Maharaja was not competent to sign, having been overthrown in his own capital; and thirdly the accession was conditional and obtained by fraud and violence.

General NcNaughton, President of the Security Council, drew up proposals for de-militarisation and after their approval, Sir Owen Dixon of Australia proceeded on 27 May 1950 to execute them. But he failed in his mission. Meanwhile Pakistan lodged a complaint that India was contemplating to convene a consituent assembly in Kashmir 'to ratify the formal accession of the state to India.' Other attempts at mediation both by the Commonwealth Prime Ministers as well as by the Security Council were abortive. Frank P. Graham of US, who was appointed UN representative for India and Pakistan, finally advised that the parties should settle the dispute by mutual consultation. This was of course a vain hope when a neutral body of the stature of the UN had not been successful. In fact two significant developments widened the rift all the more. These were the dismissal and imprisonment without trial of Sheikh Abdullah in August 1952, and American military aid to Pakistan by an agreement of 19 May 1954 between the two countries. Jinnah's successor, Choudhry Mohammed Ali, said on 26 November 1955 in his address to an all parties conference on Kashmir, 'All that Pakistan wants is that the Kashmiris should freely exercise their choice in respect of the accession.'[312] So everything was back from where it had started.

3. *Junagarh.* The state of Junagarh lay in the south-west of Kathiawar. It was tiny state having only about 6.7 lakh of people (1941 census) of whom 80 per cent were Hindus. The state was three hundred miles from Karachi (in Pakistan) and hence geographically its link was with India. Incidentally ingress to other Indian states like Gondal, Bhavnagar and Nawanagar, which had acceded to India, was through Junagarh alone. Its railway system was run by the Indian government. The famous Somnath temple which was sacked by Mahmud of Ghazni long

312 Das Gupta, 150, *op. cit.* (Pakistan News, London, 3 December 1955).

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ago, lay in this state. Junagarh was ruled by a Muslim Nawab, Sir Mahabatkhan Rasulkhanji whose passion in life was dogs, of which he had all kinds of breeds. 'He took great delight in performing their marriages with pomp and ceremony, led the bride and bridegroom in procession and gave them baths in perfumed water. The poor people of the state might go hungry, but the Nawab's pets had their daily rations of best meat, and special food imported from abroad.'[313] Engrossed in his favourite hobby most of the time, the Nawab left the administration to his prime minister Sir Nawaz Bhutto, a native of Karachi.

Junagarh was one of the three states which did not accede to any dominion following Mountbatten's appeal.[314] The Nawab's sympathies lay with Pakistan although the peoples's desire and geographical factors overwhelmingly pointed to joining the Indian dominion. On 15 August 1947 the Nawab decided to accede to Pakistan, but Pakistan's acceptance was delayed a month. Meanwhile India protested, and Mountbatten sent Lord Ismay intimating the government of India's 'willingness to accept and abide by the verdict of the people of Junagarh' in regard to accession. Nevertheless Pakistan informed the government of India on 13 September that she had accepted the accession and had signed a Standstill Agreement with Junagarh. India refused to acknowledge the validity of the accession. There were three other principalities near Junagarh namely Manavadar, Mangrol and Babariwad. Of these the Muslim ruler of Manavadar threw in his lot with Pakistan, while the Sheikh of Mangrol who was under the tutelage of the Nawab of Junagarh, in a bid to assert his freedom acceded to India on condition his independence in relation to Junagarh may be recognised. Later he retracted the agreement under pressure from the Nawab who sent troops against Mangrol. But India had already accepted the Sheikh's accession. The landholders of about 51 villages in Babariwad also joined India and the Nawab sent his troops against them too. In view of this disturbed situation India deployed its own troops round about Junagarh, but with strict instructions that they would not enter the state.

313 Tahmankar, p. 226.
314 The other two were Kashmir and Hyderabad.

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Meanwhile a Kathiawad People's Front was organised by the people of Junagarh, and the people of Kathiawad, who feared that by Junagarh's accession their own existence would be jeopardised, cut off essential supplies to the state. Prices rose steeply and there were demonstrations against the Nawab who fled to Karachi with his family, his cash and his valuable securities not forgetting to take with him his favourite dogs. Bhutto had to admit that even the Muslims had joined the People's Front. He made frantic appeals to Jinnah but without any response. So he too fled away to Pakistan, after requesting the Union Government to take over the administration.[315] In February 1948 in a referendum held in Junagarh only 21 persons voted for Pakistan.

Pakistan carried the issue to the Security Council on 15 January 1948, although she was sure that the inhabitants would never opt for accession to her. The move was more to give strength to her Kashmir case. The Security Council, however, shelved the matter.

India's stand on the Junagarh issue was not on the ground of religion, even though the vast majority were Hindus. It was wholly on the basis of geographical unity. When the Muslim states of Bahawalpur and Kalat wished to accede to India, Patel, realising that their interests were linked up with Pakistan, dissuaded them from doing so. India's desire was never to weaken Pakistan by creating such pockets, but unfortunately Pakistan jumped at every such opportunity.

4. *Hyderabad.* The Nizam of Hyderabad always thought himself to be a shade above other rulers. The British, however, never recognised the Nizam's claim to sovereignty. In 1926 Lord Reading had snubbed him by writting, 'The sovereignty of the British Crown is supreme in India, and therefore no ruler of an Indian state can justifiably claim to negotiate with the British government on an equal footing.'[316] Of its 16.5 million people (1941 census) 86.5 per cent were Hindus, 12.5 per cent Muslims and one per cent Christians and others. Mir Usman

315 Tahmankar, 227-8.
316 Indian States Committee Report, 1929, Appendix 2.

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Ali Khan Bahadur, the Nizam, was thoroughly hostile to India, and lived an isolated life surrounded by his courtiers and sycophants. An orthodox Muslim, he actively encouraged communal fanatics to harass his Hindu subjects. These fanatics, known as Razakars, were led by Kasim Razvi who had the support of Muslims and the backing of the Nizam. Razvi became in due course the virtual dictator of Hyderabad. The Razakars were joined by the Communists of Telegana, the south-eastern part of the state, and together they created a reign of terror. They 'looted and murdered Hindus, raped and abducted their women and started forcible conversion to Islam.'[317] Things were so bad that one of the state ministers, J.V. Joshi, resigned. He wrote :

> 'A complete reign of terror prevails in Parbhani and Nanded districts. I have seen in Loha a scene of devastation which brought tears to my eyes—Brahmins were killed and their eyes taken out. Women had been raped, houses burnt down in large numbers. My heart was wrung in anguish... In the circumstances, I cannot contiuue to lend my name to a government which is powerless to prevent these heart-rending atrocities which I have seen with my own eyes.'[318]

Arms and ammunition were being smuggled into Hyderabad from Pakistan, and the situation had become explosive. Mountbatten tried his level best to find a peaceful solution. Sir Walter Monckton, the Nizam's legal adviser brought a proposal agreed by Kasim Razvi as well as by the Nizam's prime minister Laik Ali. Although he was sceptical about India's acceptance as the settlement was favourable to Hyderabad, he took it to Mountbatten. Mountbatten was about to leave India, and he went to bid Patel who was recovering from a heart attack, goodbye. Patel was overwhelmed and said India owed Mountbatten such a deep debt that he would give him anything he liked as a token of India's gratitude. Quick, Mountbatten asked his approval to Monckton's proposal. Patel kept his promise. But when

317 Tahmankar, 229.
318 Ibid, 232.

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Monckton gleefully flew back to Hyderabad, the Nizam and his advisers rejected their own terms! Although Nehru was hesitant about armed intervention, Patel decided to go ahead. 'Operation Polo', as the Hyderabad campaign was called, coincided with Jinnah's death. It was all over in five days, a brilliant feat against 42,000 of the Nizam's troops and 200,000 Razakars. Major General J.N. Chaudhri, in charge of the Indian forces, took over as the Military Governor of Hyderabad. On 23 November 1949 the Nizam issued a firman accepting the constitution framed by the constituent assembly of Hyderabad as the constitution of Hyderabad.[319] The state disappeared from the map and became part of Andhra, Maharashtra and Karnataka.

The Canal Waters Dispute

At the time of partition most of the Indus waters were unexploited, although in the 1860's and 1870's British engineers had made an irrigation system the main arteries of which rivalled the Suez Canal in breadth and length. Only 75 million acre feet of the 168 million (which is the annual virgin flow of the river), were used, 9 by India and 66 by Pakistan ; 20 million were absorbed in the river beds and 73 million ran to waste. Although most of the canals were in Pakistan, they were fed by waters of those tributaries of the Indus which were in India. Thus 'partition gave India a comparatively under-developed area, combined with complete control over the upper waters of three of the six rivers, upon which most of the canals in both countries depend.'[320] Partition cut across this magnificent canal network without any regard to its functioning. Sir Cyril Radcliffe who was entrusted with the task of the fixing of boundaries had foreseen this complication, and he had suggested that Jinnah and Nehru should agree to run the Punjab Water System as a joint venture. The two leaders frowned at the suggestion, Jinnah telling him 'to get on with his job' and

319 Das Gupta, 71 (V.P. Menon, Integration, *op. cit.* p. 387).

320 Das Gupta, 162, *op. cit.* (L. Rushbrook Williams, The Indus Canals Waters Problem, Asian Review, London, April 1955, p. 140).

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Nehru that 'what India did with India's rivers was India's affair.'[321] So the division of the canal system was made on a political basis, which was not the rational one, and as could be expected, trouble soon arose.

A Standstill Agreement was signed by the chief engineers of the east and west Punjab in December 1947. According to this water would continue to be given to Pakistan's canals against payment from the Indian headworks. This agreement expired on 31 March 1948, and since Pakistan did not renew it, India cut off the supply of water. The peasants of Pakistan were adversely affected, and in the middle of April 1948 the chief engineers of the two Punjabs met to find out a way. An agreement was concluded providing for supply of water to Pakistan for a limited period, and the recognition of India's claim to the Upper Bari Doab Canal system and to the Ferozpur headworks. The agreement was not, however, ratified by Pakistan. At another meeting held at Delhi in May 1948, it was agreed that water supply would be restored, but progressively diminished, and Pakistan would gradually tap its own sources. Water supply was restored, but Pakistan alleged that the assent of its representatives was obtained under duress, despite the fact that Liaqat Ali had thanked Nehru for resumption of the supply. At yet another inter-dominion conference at Lahore. Pakistan wanted time to tap alternative sources of supply. India agreed to give seven year's time. Pakistan now laid legal claim to the Indian waters as 'a downstream riparian' and asked India to refer the matter to the International Court, threatening to bring it up before the Security Council, if this was not done. India pressed for a joint survey instead, for it was firmly convinced that if Pakistan tapped her own rivers she could easily feed all her canals herself. This stand was confirmed by David E. Lilienthal, head of the Tennessee Valley Authority and later Chairman of the US Atomic Energy Commission, after he had made an on the spot study. Although Pakistan's engineers were prepared for a joint technical survey, the Pakistani prime minister Liaqat Ali Khan did not agree for any diminution of Pakistan's supply of water from the Ravi,

321 Mosley, 199.

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Beas and Chenab. Sir Zafrullah sought the support of International Law and Usage for Pakistan's claims. The law on the point, however, was controversial and did not entirely favour Zafrullah's stand.

Meanwhile India continued her irrigation-cum-power projects on the Sutlej river, the biggest one being the Bhakra Nangal Dam. This was a joint venture of Haryana, East Punjab and Rajasthan, and India's biggest multi-purpose river valley scheme was drawn up, envisaging a cost of Rs 236 crore. When it was to come into being it would have four power houses with a total intalled capacity of 1,204 mw, about 1,100 km of canals and 3,400 of distributaries. The straight gravity dam impounded 935.5 crore metres of water and irrigated 14.8 lakh hectares of land. Pakistan feared that such a big project would reduce the flow in the river and affect supply of water in her canals. In the spring of 1951 Lilienthal, who was professionally interested in the canal problem of the two Punjabs, paid a visit and suggested an integrated Indus system on the lines of the Tennessee Valley Authority. Such a project could be jointly financed by India and Pakistan and get assistance from the World Bank. Incidentally this proved the wisdom of Sir Cyril Radcliffe who, even before the formation of Pakistan, had tried vainly for a joint water system. The World Bank got interested in Lilienthal's scheme. Eugene Black, its President wrote to Nehru on 18 November 1951 suggesting a working party of engineers to tackle the matter on a technical basis. Both sides agreed. The status quo in respect of water supply to the two dominions was meanwhile to be maintained, but India made it clear that work on Bhakra would go on. No mutual agreement could, however, be reached. The Bank then suggested its own scheme, which was grossly unfair to India, for it gave her only '27 million acre feet for 25.6 million acres, thus ensuring for Pakistan a standard of development twice as high as the corresponding parts of India.'[322] Pakistan was to get nearly 93 million acre feet against its existing 39.3 million and an added 29 million for future development. India was to forgo for

322 Das Gupta, 171.

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good the valuable Chenab water needed to develop the Rajasthan desert area, and in addition she was to pay for Pakistan's link canals. Despite the unfairness of the proposals, India, as a gesture of goodwill, accepted them. But Pakistan, who was the gainer, hesitated. She asked for a re-examination of the proposals, which India interpreted as rejection of the Bank's suggested plan. As a consequence India understood that the position reverted to the agreement of 26 June 1948 by which it had been agreed that India would progressively diminish the water supply to Pakistani canals from Indian waters giving reasonable time for Pakistan to tap its own resources.

The Bhakra Canal was opened on June 1959 by Nehru amid great rejoicing. There was a temporary fall-off in the water supply to the Sutlej canals, which the Pakistani prime minister Mohammad Ali called 'a potential threat to peace.' But India proved by figures that such a drop at this time was usual, and later on the supply had actually increased.

The World Bank continued its efforts, and a tripartite meeting was fixed at Washington on 15 November 1954 for a final settlement. But no settlement was readily forthcoming. In fact by now the World Bank had realised that Lilienthal's conclusion that the availability of Indus water was much greater than the needs of the two Punjabs, was wrong. The Bank felt that the need out-stripped the availability. Neither of the two dominions was prepared to forgo any of the advantages it enjoyed. Thus any agreement was difficult.

The World Bank, however, did not give up, and by May 1959 the main issues had been thrashed out. Black and Iliff came to discuss the matter with President Ayub and Prime Minister Nehru. The Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 marked the end of ten years of torturous negotiations. The treaty allocated the waters of the three eastern rivers—Ravi, Beas and Sutlej—to India, with certain exceptions, the main being that for ten years that Pakistan takes in constructing it works, India will keep on supplying her water from these rivers. The waters of western rivers—Indus, Jhelum and Chenab—were for Pakistan, provided India could use some of their waters in areas upstream of the Pakistan border for power and irrigation works. In the ten years transition period Pakistan would

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construct those works for which temporaily she was being allowed water from the eastern rivers, and connect them gradually with the western rivers. India would contribute 174 million dollars to the Indian Basin Development Fund. An Indus Commission was set up with two members, one from each government. In case of disagreement the matter would be referred to a neutral expert. There was provision for arbitration too. Pakistan was assured of 110 million acre feet as against 74.5 million from the western rivers, which was a substantial gain. It provided India opportunity to expand her irrigation facilities. Eugene Black called the treaty 'a billion dollar investment in peace.'

Some Minor Disputes

(*a*) *Financial.* The financial dispute between India and Pakistan relates (i) to the division of cash balances and (ii) to complaints against the Reserve Bank of India.

(*i*) *Cash Balances.* The cash balances of undivided India were a little less than four thousand million rupees on 14 August 1947. Pakistan claimed one thousand million rupees as her share, which after negotiation was finally fixed at 750 million. Out of this 200 million had been advanced to Pakistan, pending the negotiation, and so 550 million were due. India began to link the payment with the Kashmir issue, which was resented by the Pakistan prime minister, who pointed out that Kashmir was never mentioned when the agreement was being signed. The issue was dramatically settled by Gandhi who had undertaken a fast on 12 January 1948 to clear Delhi of the atmosphere of communal hatred. He proposed to fast until Muslims could move about freely in the streets of Delhi. The fast had the desired effect and the violence stopped. But the fresh issue of the unpaid cash balances came up. Patel wanted to postpone the payment in order to weaken Pakistan's hand in the Kashmir war which was then in full swing, but to Gandhi withholding of the dues was morally indefensible. Brecher relates the incident :

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'First Nehru and then Patel, tried to justify the decision. Gandhi lay flat on his back, weak and silent. Then Patel began again. After a few minutes Gandhi raised himself slowly, with tears streaming down his cheeks. Turning to Patel he said in a barley audible whisper : "You are not the Sardar I once knew," and then he fell back. The visit ended abruptly. All were stunned and filed out."[323]

Gandhi was of course right. The only reason which could really have been advanced for withholding the payment was that which Indians themselves had been blaming the British for right though their rule ; namely, expediency. But it is equally true that had Gandhi been as adamant in opposing partition as he was on this minor issue, he could have used his extraordinary gift of moral pursuasion to much greater advantage. The Reserve Bank was authorised to pay Pakistan 500 million rupees keeping back 50 million for adjustments. Even then Sir Zafrullah raised the issue of the residue amount in the Security Council, though he admitted it was too minor for any discussion.

(*ii*) *Complaint Against the Reserve Bank.* As it would take time for Pakistan to set up her mints it was agreed that her currency should commence from 1 April 1948 and meanwhile till 1 October 1948 the Reserve Bank of India would act as bankers for Pakistan as well. Pakistan was to be freely allowed ways and means advances on certain conditions governed by an agreement between the two countries. In January 1948 Pakistan alleged that India had not implemented the agreement and had hindered the Bank in assisting Pakistan. Pakistan's finance minister Ghulam Mohammed said in a press conference in Karachi, 'The Pakistan government regards the interference not only as an unfriendly act, but as an act of aggression.'[324] His Indian counterpart, Chetty, denied this categorically, but Pakistan chose to take the matter up to the Security Council. Meanwhile however, the Pakistan government was able to establish its own bank on 1 July 1948 and the issue ceased to

323 Michael Brecher, *Nehru, A Poltical Biography*, Oxford, 1959, p. 383.
324 Das Gupta, 48 *op. cit.* (*Statesman*, 9 January 1948).

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have any importance.

(*b*) *Division of Military Stores.* When it became clear that there would be partition, a Joint Defence Council was set up to supervise the division of the armed forces and the military stores. Field Marshal Auchinleck was to carry out the winding up. Pakistan's grievance was that in order to weaken her, India deliberately got the Supreme Command, which functioned under the control of the Defence Council, wound early, so that supply of military stores to Pakistan would be withheld. As regards the winding up of the Supreme Command, it does appear that India's deputy prime minister Patel, put pressure on Auchinleck to close it down.[325] As a result of this it had to be wound up a month earlier than the date (31 December) proposed by Auchinleck. But there is nothing specific to show that the arms due to Pakistan were not supplied to her. Pakistan, however, has always held that this was so, and later made it a justification for accepting US military aid.

(*c*) *The Trade Dispute.* The creation of the two dominions upset the smoothly running trade of the northern region, and the reason was mostly suspicion on each side which led to the crippling trade embargoes. The area comprising West Pakistan was surplus in wheat and used to send this to deficit areas of India. Raw cotton was also sent out from here, and in return it received finished cloth. Jute was grown in the area comprising East Pakistan but was processed near Calcutta. Coal, iron and steel and sugar were sent from India to the area which went to Pakistan.

An agreement was reached between the two dominions on 5 August 1947 to the effect that there would be no restriction on the free flow of goods until 19 February 1948 and no trade or custom barriers would be set up. But soon there followed many violations of this agreement on both sides, resulting in retaliatory and counter-retaliatory measures. The people were put to great hardship. On 26 May 1948 an agreement was reached for

325 Das Gupta, 49, *op. cit.*

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mutual supply of certain commodities—coal, cloth and yarn, steel, pig-iron and scrap, paper and board to Pakistan; raw jute, raw cotton, rice, wheat, gypsum, raw hides from Pakistan to India. This agreement was valid from 1 July 1948 to 30 June 1949. However, difficulties in implementation continued. Pakistan did not take delivery of the cotton bales for which she had previously placed orders. She also banned articles which could be purchased cheaper elsewhere, as for example textiles.

Another complication was caused when India, like other Commonwealth countries devalued her currency in terms of the US dollar. Pakistan did not do so, and its currency was appreciated against the Indian rupee. This meant India had to spend 44 per cent more to pay for imports from Pakistan. Pakistan refused to ship 4 lakh bales of jute at the old price, although it was purchased before the devaluation. India began to produce her own jute, and cut off Pakistan's coal. These retaliatory measures only ruined the trade of both countries. In 1950, therefore, another agreement was made by which Pakistan agreed to supply jute in exchange for Indian steel and jute goods. By yet another agreement in February 1951 India recognised the par value of the Pakistan rupee. In 1958 the exchange trade was greatly augmented to the benefit of both dominions. With the economic progress of the tw states the extent of their inter-dependence declined, but trade relations remained cordial.

The Evacuee Property Problem

The mass migration following partition was the biggest recorded in history. The painful trek was not only full of bloodshed and horrors, it was a hasty departure from home to a homeland, in which the unfortunate victims lost almost everything they had—houses, land, money and movables, While only about 7,900,000 Muslims migrated to West Pakistan, almost five million Hindus and Sikhs were driven out from the Punjab side and another four million from East Bengal.[326] Muslims

326 Das Gupta, 188 (Figures of Muslims given by the Pakistan Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation).

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left behind property valucd at rupees 1,000 million, as against which the value of the property of non-Muslims left in Pakistan was five times as much, viz., 5,090 million rupees.[327]

In view of this great disparity, Pakistan never evinced any serious interest in the mutual settlement of claims, and indeed always tried to delay or postpone a settlement. The Hindu and Sikh migrants were prosperous while the Muslims who left India for Pakistan belonged to the poorer classes. This also accounted for the wide disparity in the value of the property. left behind by them. Even the Pakistani organ *Dawn* was forced to observe that the people who migrated to India belonged on the whole to the capitalist class, and those who replaced them in Pakistan to the toiling classes.[328]

The problem was discussed for the first time on 20 August 1947 under the presidentship of Mountbatten, both the prime ministers attending. It was agreed that the property would not be illegally seized and Custodians of Refugee Property would be appointed. The West Punjab government, however, provided in their orders that the Rehabilitation Commissioner could grant temporary one year's leases of evacuee property. This was against the agreement. Further, by another ordinance of 1 December 1947, Pakistan placed so many restrictions on transfer of evacuee property that the provision became a nullity. A number of Inter Dominion Conferences were called to resolve the issue. It became clear that to expect refugees to go back and claim the property abandoned by them, was a vain hope. A solution could be reached only on a government to government basis. India amended its evacuee laws to bring them in line with the restrictive measures taken in Pakistan, and prohibited alienation of evacuee property on or after 15 August 1947 without the Custodian's permission.

327 Das Gupta, 189. (These are the official verified figures. Other estimates are Muslim 3.8 billion rupees, non-Muslim 38.1 billion (Schectmann); Muslim £ 375 million, non-Muslim £ 1500 million (*India News*, London, 21 June 1952). Pakistan did not accept any of the figures, nor gave any of her own.

328 1—Das Gupta, 190.

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The Joint Offiicial Committee which met on 23-25 March 1948 at Lahore decided that agricultural land should be acquired by the respective governments at the fair price, and after valuation there would be an inter-governmental deal. Urban house property could be sold or exchanged by the owners, and to facilitate this a Joint Government Agency for Sales and Exchanges would be formed. Owners could take over their movable property and sell it off freely. Pakistan not only did not implement the agreement, it also re-opened the basic question of the settlement of agricultural property on which it had been agreed that it should be acquired and evaluated.

At the fifth inter-dominion conference held at Karachi on 10-13 January 1949 it was decided that rents would be collected for evacuee agricultural lands and urban property and transferred to the dominions where owners had migrated. Settlement on government basis should be postponed till proper records were prepared and exchanged. There would be free sale and exchange of urban immovable evacuee property. The Karachi agreement did not work. There were accusations and counter-accusations, and Pakistan went slow with preparation of records and other formalities. While the disposal of movable property proceeded as planned, in the case of houses and land India began to feel that the only way out was for each dominion to take over such property, dispose it off by auction and to ask the debtor dominion to pay the difference in value to the creditor dominion. No agreement was forthcoming, and meanwhile the refugees who had poured in from Pakistan, were becoming restive. India felt that their demand for compensation for property they had abandoned, from the assets of evacuee property, could no longer be ignored. The Displaced Persons (Compensation and Rehabilitation) Act, passed on 9 October 1954, therefore empowered the Central Government to pay compensation to refugees from the evacuee property sale pool. Mohammad Ali, the Pakistan prime minister categorised India's scheme as being 'inimical to any settlement of the dispute'. The Pakistan government said in November 1955 that there was no common ground left between the two countries, as India had acquired the rights titles and interests of the evacuees in their

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property. In February 1955 Pakistan too proceeded to do the same.

Two main points were instrumental in hindering a settlement. One was of course the disproportionate value of the two properties. Although Pakistan never accepted India's figures, the fact remains that in any arrangement of exchange of assets she would be the bigger loser. The other reason for her reluctance to come terms was that about twenty per cent of the agricultural evacuee land of Pakistan was irrigated by the waters of the Sutlej and Ravi, and Pakistan felt that India could at any time divert the flow of the waters of these rivers and make the land unproductive. So Pakistan linked up the evacuee problem, in so far as agricultural land was concerned, with the canal water dispute.

Mountbatten's Departure—His Achievements

Mahatma Gandhi had been playing the role of peace maker in the orgy of communal violence which engulfed Delhi. Apart from the Hindu-Muslim conflict, the strained relations between Nehru and Patel had been upsetting him. Indeed there could be no two men so unlike them who were ever entrusted with the difficult task of consolidating an India torn by partition. Nehru, the westernised idealist, emotional and sensitive, socialistic in views though aristocratic in habits, secular to the point of appearing to be pro-Muslim, adept in oratory and having a mass appeal, weighing things so much in the balance of propriety as to make every decision a torture ; and Patel the iron man, from a peasant family but in league with capitalists, bold, confident, distant, reserved, stern and blunt, scoffing at secularism, intensely practical and never regretting a decision once he made it. Gandhi summed up the difference very well when he said 'Jawahar is a thinker, Sardar a doer.'[329] It was the destiny of these men, so unlike each other, to guide India in its troubled years. Gandhi knew of the conflict between them and in general he supported Nehru. Indeed the two—Gandhi and Nehru—were like father and son.

329 Brecher, 392.

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But Gandhi's guidance soon came to end, when he fell to an assassin's bullet on 30 January 1948. It was strange that the apostle of non-violence met a violent end. The *Hindustan Standard* wrote 'Gandhiji has been killed by his own people for whose redemption he lived. This second crucifixion in the history of the world has been enacted on a Friday—the same day Jesus was done to death one thousand nine hundred and fifteen years ago. Father forgive us.'[330]

Mountbatten had left India on 21 June 1948. It was a leave taking surcharged with emotion, for after years the Indian people had a British administrator who did not despise them. High tributes were paid, particularly by Nehru who was admittedly bound by personal relations to the Mountbattens. His biographer says, 'Although friendship cannot be measured precisely, Nehru probably feels closer to the Mountbattens than to any in India, except his daughter and, perhaps, Krishna Menon.'[331] There were many similarities between the two persons, and their approach to problems was often identical. Separated by race and culture they were one in their strength of resolve and endeavour :

> But there is neither East nor West, Border nor Breed nor Birth,
> When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth!'[332]

No one perhaps could master the fine art of winning people more than Mountbatten. He could thaw out even the uncommunicative Jinnah, and had everyone opening out his heart to him at the very first meeting. But unmoved himself as the wide ocean he would take in the waters of confidences, giving none in return. Very soon he knew everything about those around him, while *they* knew nothing about Mountbatten. Once he knew them he twisted them about his little finger, his

330 Alan Campbell-Johnson, *Mission With Mountbatten*, Robert Hale, 1951, p. 281, *op. cit.*
331 Brecher, 413.
332 Kipling, *The Ballad of East and West*.

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eyes all the time on his I-day calender. He could do it because he treated people not as chess pieces but as living pulsating human beings, with their weaknesses and their follies. Like the Pied Piper he played upon the pipe of partition and they all followed him; some to their new homes others to perdition. The bosses at home had sent him out to perform what they thought was a miracle. The King himself had given him his blessings. He did perform what they sent him for, but it was in no sense a miracle. It was the bloodiest and cruellest migration which took place in history, ill-planned, ill-executed and ill-concieved.

He was a successful governor general, whipping up the petrified Indian leaders to activity when faced with the communal massacres, taking a firm line with the native states when it was needed, maintaining calm and balance when the terrible tragedy of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination unnerved everyone. His presence of mind on the occasion saved what might well have been the bloodiest communal massacre.[333] Indians are an emotional people. They forgive much and forget early if their hearts can be won over. Wavell produced a better plan and it did not spell partition. The Cabinet Mission's cold and reasoned approach which categorically rejected partition, failed to evoke any response. But Mountbatten's sugar-coated pill was readily swallowed, all because he appealed to the hearts of the Indians not to their minds. When he left, Nehru was almost in tears, and on his farewell journey, he was 'cheered and garlanded all the way to the Gandhi grounds, where a crowd of a quarter of a million were trying to gain entrance.'[334] When one of the horses of the coach 'reared

[333 As I went into the house where his (Gandhi's) body was lying someone in the crowd shouted out :
'It was a Muslim who did it !'
I turned immediately and said :
'You fool, don't you know it was a Hindu ?'
Of course, I didn't known—no one knew at that stage ; but I did know this : if it was a Muslim, we were lost.
There would be civil war without fail. Thank God, it wasn't! It turned out a Hindu extremist. Terraine, 164

334 1—Allan Campbell-Johnson, *Mission With Mountbatten*, Robert Hale, 1951, p. 351.

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and plunged, bucked and almost rolled over,' and had to be unhitched ; as he was led away the crowd shouted 'Even the horses refused to take you from us...'[335] It was a send off which must have been given only to a handful of administrators in history. And the 'friendship and love of India' which the Mountbattens carried back with them was won all in about a year's time. Mountbatten's achievement does not lie in his bringing about Indian independence. That would have been brought about anyway, and perhaps at a much less cost. Nor does it lie in his governor generalship, which in any case was too short to form any judgement of it. His real achievement lies in being able to win the affection of the Indian people despite their suffering ; and this was made possible because the attachment was mutual. After he had left India Mountbatten said in retrospect 'I loved India, and I had always done my best to serve the people of the whole sub-continent.'[336]

335 Hatch, 361.
336 Terraine, 165.

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3

The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms 1919

'I told them (the viceroy, the governors and the lieutenant governors) that I was more depressed than I could say by what they had said; that I did not seem to talk the same language as they did; that I dare say they were right; but if they were right, then our policy was wrong; we need not discuss political reform any further. The announcement of August 20 was wrong; the Minto-Morley reform scheme was wrong, and India ought not to have any political institutions.'

Montagu on the Government of India's Attitude to Reforms.

The Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were nobly conceived, but by the time they found practical shape they were just as useless as any which had been introduced before. They could be likened to pure milk coming from the udders of the cow, but 80 per cent water by the time it was poured into the consumer's vessel. Faced by a belligerent viceroy, and governors whose only aim was to keep on governing as long as posible, Montagu, the British secretary of state who, armed with his English sense of justice and fairplay, had set out hopefully from home, was so disgusted that he told them that 'law and order was not my business; I could not keep law and order from England, and those who governed the provinces were responsible. But I could not defend them if they did things that I did not agree with; then I must resign and they must get somebody else to

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do it.'[1] Nevertheless neither did Montagu resign, nor did he introduce the reforms he thought he should. The imperialist bureaucracy won, as they always did, and India got, as Tilak said 'a sunless dawn.'

Central and Provincial Subjects

The Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, as the 1919 Act was popularly called (Chelmsford being the viceroy then) distinguished between central and provincial subjects. Central subjects were those in which all the provinces as a whole would be concerned, while provincial subjects were almost exclusively of local interest. Central subjects included subjects such as defence, relations with Indian states and foreign affairs, tariffs and customs, railways, posts and telegraphs, income-tax, currency and coinage, savings banks, public debt, commerce, shipping and trading corporations, civil and criminal law, the Geological Survey and control of minerals, the Survey of India and archaeology, census and statistics, the all-India Services and the Public Service Commission. Provincial subjects included local self-government, medical administration and public health, education (with some exceptions), public works and irrigation, agriculture and land revenue administration, forest and famine relief, police, prisons and adminstration of justice, the veterinary department and co-operative societies, excise, registration of deeds and documents as well as births and deaths, religious endowments, industries and local fund audit, fisheries and provincial revenues.[2] In case of any doubt regarding a subject being central or provincial, the decision would be that of the governor general in council.

Reserved and Transferred subjects

Provincial subjects had a further division into reserved or transferred. The transferred subjects covered those 'which offered the most opportunity for local knowledge and social

1 E Montagu, *An Indian Diary*, (ed.) Venetia Montagu, Heinemann, 1930, p. 216.
2 B.B. Misra, *The Administrative History of India*, Oxford 1970, pp. 70-71.

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service, those in which mistakes which might occur would not be irremediable, those in which Indians had shown themselves keenly interested, and those which stood most in need of development.'[3] These were subjects like public works, agriculture and fisheries, co-operative societies, forests, local self-government, medical, industries, excise, and certain branches of education. Reserved subjects were those provincial subjects not included in the transferred head. These included irrigation, land revenue administration, justice, police and prisons, factory inspection, labour disputes, industrial insurance, control of newspapers, books and printing presses. The transferred subjects would be, looked after by the governor acting with ministers, and the reserved ones by the governor in council.

The Provincial Government

The head of the provincial government was the governor, assisted by his council which would not exceed four members, one of which had to be a person who had served in India under the Crown for at least twelve years. If the council had only two members, neither of whom was an Indian by birth, there would be two more unofficial Indian members. The Act did not change the functioning of the council. Cases were decided by a majority vote, but the governor could overrule the council in cases in which he thought 'the safety, tranquillity or interests' of the province or any part of it were affected.

(a) *Ministers*—Ministers were to be appointed by the governor, and he could appoint any number of them he considered necessary. A minister's position was peculiar. On the one hand he held office at the pleasure of the governor, and on the other the legislature voted his salary as well as the grant of his department. Within six months of his appointment he had to get elected by the council. If he did not enjoy the confidence of the legislature, he had to go. The governor could also get rid of him if the situation so demanded. A minister could of course resign if his

3 V.P. Menon, *Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms*, Bhavan, 1965, p. 12 (Referred to hereafter as 'Menon')

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advice was not accepted by the governor. Although it was specified that ministers would have corporate responsibility, this did not mean that orders on a particular transferred subject had to be passed with the assent of all the ministers. In debates in the legislative council the ministers were free to air their views, but 'members of the executive council should act together, and ministers should act together.'[4] Thus the position of ministers was precarious. It was this, indeed, which was largely responsible for their ineffectiveness and the failure of the system of dyarchy introduced by the reforms.

(b) *The Governor*—The governor was the kingpin of the provincial administration, and the sweeping powers which the reform measures gave him made it clear that the British government had no intention to fulfill their promise of giving responsible government to Indians as conveyed in the secretary of state's announcement of 20 August 1917. Every governor would receive on his appointment an instrument of instructions defining his duties and responsibilities. A member of the governor's council would bring to his notice any matter of importance which he could not himself dispose of. The governor could of course consider any matter on his own initiative. But what was more, a head of the department could also take up any case to the governor. This provided a ready opportunity for departmental heads and senior bureaucrats to bypass their minister. It has already been said that a governor could veto his council on matters which he thought affected the 'safety, tranquillity' or interests of the province. This gave a wide discretion and almost any matter of importance could be dragged into the prohibitory net. One could understand 'safety and tranquillity' but 'interest' would imply that the governor was better aware of the needs of his province then the ministers and the elected representatives. A minister depended on the governor almost solely as far as his office was concerned. For once, 'at the pleasure of the governor' was not a formal statement, and it would more correctly convey the real intention if instead of 'pleasure' the word 'will' had been substituted. Swamped as it was by nominated members,

4 Menon, 18.

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the council would naturally return only that minister who had the governor's backing, Even if he somehow got through the council, the governor could always get rid of him 'if he felt that the situation demanded such a course,'[5] or if he believed 'that his policy was either seriously at fault or out of accord with the views of the legislative council.'[6] As the governor himself was judge of the circumstances in each case, no one could challenge his judgement. Moreover, his powers of interference did not stop there. If the minister whom the governor had dismissed had the support of the legislature, and the governor found it impossible because of this reason to appoint a successor, he could dissolve the legislature, and if the new legislature too proved obdurate, he could temporarily assume control of the administration of the department concerned. Nay, if he found it impossible to get a minister who could handle the department (which of course meant handling it as the governor wanted) he could get the assent of the governor general in council to revoke the transfer of the subject itself, and so be in charge of it always.

(c) *Joint Working*—Although there was a clear distinction between transferred and reserved subjects, there were some, like borrowing and taxation, which could overlap. In such a case the governor discussed them with his council and ministers sitting together, and decided whether the governor in council would deal with it as a reserved subject or the governor with his ministers as a transferred subject. Here again, though there was consultation, the decision was solely that of the governor.

(d) *The Legislative Council*—In each of the eight major provinces to which the reforms applied in the first instance there was to be a legislative council, elected every three years.[7] In the councils of the various provinces the number of members ranged from 53 in Assam to 140 in Bengal, of whom

5 Menon, 15.
6 Ibid, 16.
7 A similar arrangement was made applicable to Burma when it became a province in 1923.

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the elected members were respectively 39 and 114. The president of the council held office for four years. The first president was appointed by the governor, and thereafter he was a councillor elected by the council itself. His functions were more or less those of a speaker in the present council and assembly. He maintained order and controlled the debates and could order the withdrawal or suspension of a member for grave disorderly conduct.

The Minto-Morley reforms had given up the device of having an official majority in the councils. There remained however, a number of nominated members, and others were elected by a system of indirect election. In the new councils established by the 1919 Act the proportion of elected members could not be less than 70 per cent. Indirect election, too, was abolished. The normal qualification for a voter was residence within his constituency and payment of a minimum land revenue, rent or local rates, and income-tax.[8] Women were not given voting rights, but the legislative councils had discretion in the matter, and they extended the franchise to them. About one-tenth of the adults (men) came to form the electorate under these conditions, but a large number of them were illiterate.

(e) *Communal Electorates*—The Montagu-Chelmsford Report expressed itself against communal electorates. It felt that they would lead to rival political camps. The minorities would 'settle down into a feeling of satisfied security'[9] and the majority, 'thinking they had done all they need do for their weaker fellow countrymen,'[10] would henceforth use all their power for their own purposes. The report categorically concluded, 'We regard any system of communal electorates,

8 The residential qualification was prescribed for the candidates as well in Bombay, Punjab and CP. Elsewhere a candidate need not be resident in his constituency.

9 The Montagu-Chelmsford Report on Communal Electorates, 1918. C.H. Philips (ed.) *The Evolution of India and Pakistan, Select Documents*, Oxford, 1962, p. 209.

10 Ibid.

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therefore, as a very serious hindrance to the development of the self-governing principle.'[11] Despite being convinced that communal electorates would retard self-government, the reformers continued the practice. It was, as they themselves frankly admitted, a concession to the Muslims who regarded 'separate representation and communal electorates as their only safeguards.'[12] The principle would apply to the Sikhs and to other minorities as well.

(f) *Powers and Procedures in the Councils*—The legislative council could legislate on provincial subjects, but could not touch central subjects or matters relating to the previous sanction of the governor general, though overlapping could not always be avoided. The council could not alter or repeal any law of the central legislature enacted after the 1919 Act. The provinces had the right to impose taxes raised for provincial purposes such as land revenue, cesses and so forth.

Bills passed by the provincial council required the assent of the governor and also of the governor general. Indeed, certain kinds of bills, for example those relating to religion and land revenue had to be reserved for consideration by the governor general.

Apart from the power of the governor to veto a bill, he could, for a reserved subject, certify that its passage was 'essential for the discharge of his responsibility for the subject.' Even if the council refused to consider such a bill, or to pass it in the form recommended by the governor, he could deem it as having been passed. But in such cases (except during an emergency) the bill could become law only by being laid before both Houses of Parliament for eight days and then getting the King's assent. The governor could also certify the demand for a money grant he considered essential.

The rules of procedure were few, leaving the councils themselves to determine details. New provisions were inserted to give the councils greater freedom of debate or to meet the needs of a somewhat enlarged house. An adjournment could

11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.

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be moved, subject to certain restrictions following the English practice, for discussing some urgent matter. A question could not be disallowed by the governor on the ground of being inconsistent with the public interest. The governor determined the days in the session which were to be allocated respectively for public and private business. In view of there being a large number of members who might not know English, provision was made for their addressing the council in any of the recognised vernaculars.

The budget was dealt with in two stages. There was first a general debate, and then a discussion of the detailed demands. Formal resolutions were to be moved in the second stage of discussion. As no expenditure could normally be sanctioned without the supply being voted, the time given for the presentation and discussion of the budget was twelve days, different periods being allotted to individual grants, according as the council determined, but not exceeding two days for any one grant. Excess and supplementary grants could be moved to meet contingencies, such as drought etc., which could not be forseen from before. In such cases the council's approval was obtained later.

The Central Government

(a) *The Central Executive*—The structure of the central executive remained unaltered. The governor general in council continued to be responsible in all central matters to the British Parliament through the secretary of state. The member of the governor general's council were, as before, appointed by the British monarch, and could not be removed by the adverse vote of the legislature. The composition of the council, however, was altered. The previous limitation of six memberss was removed. Although three of the members still had to have at least ten years in the Crown's service, one of the three could have acquired the necessary legal qualification in India as well as in England. With these relaxations it was possible to have three Indian members.

The salary of the secretary of state was henceforth paid out of the money provided by the English Parliament, not from

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Indian revenues. Further a High Commissioner was to be appointed by the governor general with the approval of the secretary of state. He was the agent of the government of India in England, and much of the work relating to the India Office, for example that connected with purchase of stores, the Indian student's department and the Trade Commissioner, was taken over by him.[13] The Indian element in the secretary of state s council was strengthened. The period of service on the council was reduced from seven years to five, so that Indians could work on it without the necessity of staying abroad for too long a period.

(b) *The Ce tral Legislature*—The central government was formed of two houses of legislature, a departure from the previous practice. The two chambers were the council of state and the legislative assembly. The council had 60 members, of whom 33 were elected, 7 nominated, non-official, and a maximum of 20 nominated officials. The assembly had 145 members, 104 elected, 15 nominated non-officials, and 26 nominated officials. The Act provided (section XX II, 4) that 'every member of the governor general's executive council shall be nominated as a member of one chamber of the Indian legislature, and shall have the right of attending in and addressing the other chamber, but shall not be a member of both chambers.'[14] The president of the assembly was initially appointed by the government for four years, after which he was to be elected. The vice president was to be elected right from the very beginning. The term of the assembly was fixed at three years and of the council as five. Separate representation was provided to Muslims, Sikhs, Europeans, landlords and to representatives of Indian commerce in the assembly; and to Muslims, Sikhs and representative of European commerce in the council.

(c) *Franchise*—The qualifications of voters for the council

13 Menon, 51.

14 C.H. Philips, *The Evolution of India and Pakistan, Select Documents*, Oxford, 1962, p. 278.

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of state were comparatively much higher than for the legislative assembly. The idea was to have mature persons in the upper house, so that a check could be exercised over hasty measures, if any, of the lower chamber. The total electorate for the assembly was over 9,00,000 voters, while even in the larger provinces the voters for electing members numbered only between two to three thousand, and in small ones like Assam, barely 450.[15] A peculiar feature of franchise for the council of state was that the qualifications prescribed differed from one province to another.

(d) *Powers and Procedures*—The powers exercised by the central legislature in regard to the budget corresponded broadly with those of the provincial legislature exercised over the provincial budget. Estimates were laid before both the houses, but appropriation of revenues were voted by the assembly alone. Certain heads, however, could not be voted even by the assembly. These were (i) interest and sinking fund charges on loans, (ii) expenditure of which the amount was prescribed by or under any law, (iii) salaries and pensions of persons appointed by or with the approval of His Majesty or by the secretary of state in council, (iv) salaries of chief commissioners and judicial commissioners, and (v) expenditure classified by the order of the governor general in council as ecclesiastical, political and defence.[16] The governor general would decide, in case of dispute, whether a particular expenditure fell under these heads or not. Similar restrictions were placed on other legislation apart from financial. The legislature could not legislate, except with the previous sanction of the governor-general on any matter affecting public debt or public revenue, the religion or religious rites and usages of any class of subjects, the discipline or maintenance of defence forces, and foreign relations.

In legi-lation the two chambers exercised co-cordinate powers. A bill could be introduced in any of the two chambers, but it required the assent of both before it could be passed. In case

15 Menon, 52 and 54.
16 C.H. Philips, *Select Documents*, Oxford, 1962, p. 279.

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of disagreement between the assembly and the council, the way out could be either to refer it to a select committee or to a joint sitting of t e houses. Nevertheless the governor general had such overriding powers over legislation that despite all the deliberations of the two houses, the final say was his alone. If the assembly refused to assent to any votable demand or reduced it, he could certify it as passed in full. This applied to other legislation also, apart from money bills. Though both chambers might throw out a bill or amend it, the governor general could, in exercise of his extraordinary powers, in the interest of safety, tranquillity or interest of British India, certify it as carried though in its entirety. These powers were in addition to the vote it might exercise in refusing his assent to bills passed, without which they could not become law.

The Service Commission and the Statutory Commission

A public service commission was to be set up consisting of five members one of whom was the chairman. The members were to be appointed by the secretary of state in council, with a five years term. The commission was to look after recruitment and control of public services in India.

The statutory commission was to be appointed after ten years of the date of passing of the 1919 Act. It would examine the working of the new constitution in detail in the various provinces and report 'as to whether and to what extent it is desirable to establish the principle of responsible government, or to extend, modify, or restrict the degree of responsible government then existing therein, including the question whether the establishment of second chambers of local legislatures is or is not desirable'.[17]

The 1919 Act introduced the system of dyarchy, i.e. the distribution of executive powers between the governor in council, and the governor acting with the advice of his ministers responsible to the provincial legislature.[18] The object of the

17 C.H. Philips, *Select Documents*, Oxford, 1962, p. 281.
18 The system was invented by Lionel Curtis, and applied to the Indian provinces, not to the Central Government.

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reforms was to introduce representative government gradually at the lower levels. In local bodies the aim was 'complete popular control' and 'the largest possible independence for them outside control.'[19] In the provinces 'some measure of responsibility at once, and complete responsibility as soon as conditions permit.'[20] 'The government of India would remain wholly responsible to Parliament...and its authority in essential matters must remain in disputable...In the meantime the Indian legislative council should be enlarged and made more representative, and its opportunities of influencing government increased.[21] Finally it was envisaged to relax in some measure the control 'of Parliament and the secretary of state over the government of India and provincial governments.'[22]

In assessing how for the objects of the Act were realised it has to be seen how much of autonomy the Act actually conceded. A careful examination of the provisions themselves will reveal that this indeed was little. The report of the reforms committee itself made it clear that at the higher levels autonomy was not intended. 'We are not prepared' the committee said 'without experience of their results, to effect like changes (as in the lower levels) in the government of India.'[23] But did the reforms really introduce representative government in the provinces and local bodies, as they promised to do? It must be admitted that they didn't. It is true that the provincial legislative councils had a larger number of elected members. But these could not be called the real representatives of the people, for with the condition of residence in the constituency, and the requirement of being a payee of land revenue and income tax, only about one-tenth of the adult male population were voters. Communal electorates too, a concession to Muslims to secure their support, was an unwise step. They sowed the germ of future discord between the various

19 C.H. Philips, *Select Documents*, Oxford, 1962, p. 267. Principles of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid pp. 267-8.

22 Ibid p. 268.

23 Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms.

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communities, and it is doubtless strange, that they were insisted upon by the reformers, even though they were violently against them.

The powers of the governor were supreme. The members of the legislative councils could discuss matters as much as they liked, but that was about all they could do. Even the majority votes had no value, for the governor could always withhold his assent to a bill, veto it, or certify it as being essential for the discharge of his responsibility of the subject. If the provincial council refused to consider a bill the governor thought essential, or to pass it in a form he desired, he could treat the bill as having been passed after laying it in the houses of the British Parliament and finally getting the royal assent. In financial matters the governor could certify any grant the council was loath to pass. Thus provincial autonomy existed only in name. It was the same old wine of executive control in new bottles. As viewed by Lloyd George, the reforms were in the nature of an experiment only. They were, as the Joint Select Committee Report frankly observed, 'a way of learning through experience.'

The ministers had responsibility without power. The Select Committee unabashedly asked the governors first to let the ministers 'have their own way' and then to veto them, 'at the same time fixing the responsibility upon them.'[24] It was a very convenient device; all the praise for the governor, all the blame on the minister. No wonder in actual working ministers felt frustrated. The governors appointed and dismissed the ministers as they wished. Every minister appointed had to get elected by the legislative council within six months. In the councils, however, the elected members were always divided by religious and other ties, and solid support was available to a minister from the official block alone. This again meant loyalty to the governor rather than to the legislature. It was small wonder that the ministers became the governor's stooges. In disgust C. V. Chintamani said 'Power is with the governor, not with the ministers.'

It was one of the principles of dyarchy that the ministers and the members of the governor's council should work in

24 C.H. Philips, *Select Documents*, Oxford, 1962, p. 272.

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unison. Often in the case of disagreement, they were summoned together by the governor. But it was vain to except the two to agree on anything, and usually such joint consultations ended in a fiasco, hindering the smooth working of dyarchy. The Act provided joint consultation of the ministers in the case of subjects dealt with by them (Section 52 : 3). But quite often the governor consulted them individually, thus transgressing the principle of joint responsibility. The Select Committee on the government of India bill of 1919 had expressed the hope that there would be 'free consultation between both halves of the government' and while each side 'will advise and assist the other; neither will control or impede the other.'[25] It did not work out that way at all. In fact the governor's position became even more powerful by the squabbles between the two halves. C. Y. Chintamani complained that he was overruled even in petty matters like nomination of names on a library committee. Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, an executive councillor of Bombay, claimed that 'the minister's function in law was merely to advise.'[26]

The division of provincial subjects into transferred and reserved, too, was irrational, and posed many difficulties. Sir K.V. Reddi, a minister in the Madras government said 'I was a minister for development without the forests. I was a minister for agriculture minus irrigation....Then again I was minister for industries without factories, boilers, electicity and water power, mines or labour—all of which are reserved subjects.'[27] Another minister who was in charge of the medical department found that the terms and conditions of Indian Medical Officers were prescribed by the secretary of state, and he had no say in the matter.

According to a memorandum submitted by the governments of Bombay to the Indian Statutory Commission 1930, both the halves of the government functioned smoothly and there was 'a good deal of give and take by the honourable members

25 Report of the Joint Select Committee, 1919, Vol. 1.

26 *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bhavan, 1969, Vol. XI, p. 379.

27 Ibid, p. 381.

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and ministers.' The experience in Bombay, concluded the report 'has been one of harmonious relations, and no difficulty has been experienced in this matter.'[28] The general experience in other provinces, however, was different. The salt tax was doubled in 1923 though the legislative assembly had rejected the measure. Similarly the Press (Princes's Protection) Bill which protected the princes against adverse notices of their acts in book and papers, was certified by the viceroy after having been thrown out by the legislative assembly.

Another cause for the failure of dyarchy was the direct approach of secretaries and heads of departments to the governor. Whenever there was difference of opinion between these senior bureaucracts and the minister, they briefed the governor, and with his assistance, could easily outdo the dissenting minister. Besides, the finance department was in the charge of the member of the governor's council, who frequently vetoed a minister's proposal on the excuse of non-availability of funds. He generally had his way, for the governor sided with the finance secretary and the finance member, rather than with the minister

The minority report on the working of dyarchy 1924, which was signed by T.B.Sapru, P.S. Sivasmamy Aiyer, M.A. Jinnah and R.P. Paranjpye, four of the nine members, observed that the system 'had been severely tested during the course of the year' and had practically broken down at least in two provinces, viz. Bengal and the CP. 'We think' said the report 'that the Bihar government has correctly summed up the position in the provinces by saying that dyarchy is working creakily, and minor remedies may cure a creak or two'. But any amendments so made, thought the committee, would not afford any 'valuable training towards responsible government, or solve any of the difficulties in the system'.[29] For all these numerous reasons dyarchy was like a chariot which, pulled in contrary directions by two unruly horses, wobbled precariously along.

28 Christine E. Dobbin, *Basic Documents*, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1970, p. 77 & 78. (M. Gwyer and A. Appadorai, Speeches and Documents on the Indian Constitution, 1921-47 Oxford, 1957, I, 95).

29 C.H. Philips (ed.) *Select Documents*. Oxford, 1962, pp. 285-6.

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It was natural that the reaction of most political leaders in India on the reform proposals should be one of undisguised disappointment. Tilak described them as a sunless dawn. Mrs Annie Besant said they were unworthy of England to give and of India to take. Patel termed them 'retrograde'. N.C. Kelkar thought them cruelly disappointing and 'almost a wicked attempt to let Indian leaders be stewed in their own juice'. Professor J.L. Banerji considered them to be 'grudging and abortive'. Subrahmaniya Aiyar compared them to a narcotic offered to Indians.[30] A manifesto issued by prominent leaders of Madras believed that the scheme showed 'distrust of the people of India' and it was such a hotch potch that it was 'impossible to modify or improve it.'[31]

The moderate among the Congress such as Sir Dinshaw Wacha, Chimanlal Setalvad and Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, as could be expected, supported the proposals. But even they thought the central government portion of the scheme was too cautious and lacked liberality. Montagu had already sounded the moderate leaders about the reforms when he came to India in 1917-18, An entry of 24 January 1918 in his diary says:

'We talked about the formation of a moderate party; they were very enthusiastic ; and talked about editing newspapers and so forth. I think they mean business.'

Between the moderates who hailed the reforms and the extremists denounced them, there was a strong intermediate group who, who though not quite satisfied with them, was of the view that they could become acceptable with some changes.

Even the minorities were not quite satisfied. Sikhs wanted more representation. The Anglo-Indians and Indian Christians demanded separate communal representation, and they were supported by the non-official Europeans, Certain other communities like non-Brahmins in Madras who were not given separate electorates began to agitate for them. The reforms had succeeded in sowing dissension among the minorities.

The role of the Indian Civil Service was not good, inasmuch

30 *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bhavan, 1969, Vol. X p. 276.

31 Ibid, p. 277.

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as they tried their best to oppose the reforms, and when the move failed, to make them unworkable. Despite overwhelming limitations and practical difficulties, however, Indian ministers were able to introduce and carry though a number of useful measures like the Indian Factories Amendment Act, the Workman's Compensation Act, the Reciprocity Bill for equal treatment to Indians in the dominions and colonies of the British empire, the Civil Marriage Act, the Steel Protection Act and so forth. An Industrial Commission was appointed in the field of industry, a Tariff Board appointed and a Marine Committee set up. Nevertheless the reforms on the whole did not fulfil Indian aspirations. They were halting in their approach, based on mistrust of the Indians, whittled down by an imperialist viceroy, scorned by a disdaining bureaucracy, calculated to create further division in already divided political and social groups, and defeating the aim of autonomy which they professed. As one of the impartial European critics who had personal experience of the reforms, rightfully said about their import, 'Instead of teaching India responsibility we are teaching her irresponsibility.'[32]

32 E. Villiers of the Bengal legislative council—Quoted in *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bhavan, 1969, Vol. XI, p. 382.

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The Government of India Act 1935

'We have as good a right to be in India as anyone there, except, perhaps, the Depressed Classes, who are the original stock. Our government is not an irresponsible government. It is a government responsible to the Crown and to Parliament. It is incomparably the best government that India has ever seen or will ever see.'

Winston Churchill's speech on the Second Reading of the Government of India Bill, 11 February 1935.

Events Leading to Act of 1935

A number of developments intervened between the reforms of 1919 and those of 1935. There was the repressive Rowlatt Act which led Mahatma Gandhi to launch his *satyagraha* movement, culminating in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Hindus and Muslims came close, and the khilafat movement gave Gandhi's non co-operation strength. With the Chauri Chaura incident, however, and Gandhi's consequent withdrawl of non co-operation, Hindus and Muslims again drifted apart. The Swarajists conceived the idea of 'wrecking legislatures from within'. Meanwhile the Muddiman Committee submitted a somewhat uncertain report of the performance of the 1919 reforms. It praised dyarchy and also completely condemned it (in a separate minority report). The all British Simon

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Commission which was sent to make a study of the working of the government and the extent to which it needed modification, was boycotted by almost all shades of Indian opinion. Lord Birkenhead justified the exclusion of Indians from the Simon Commission, and challenged them to produce an agreed solution themselves. An all Parties Conference under Motilal Nehru took up the challenge and produced the Nehru Report. Jinnah rejected the Report and brought out his Fourteen Points at the 1929 All India Muslim League Conference at Delhi. He asked for one-third representation for Muslims in the central legislature, and for separate electorates, and opposed any territorial redistribution in the NWFP, Punjab, and Bengal which might disturb the Muslim majority there. In a way therefore Lord Birkenhead's challenge could not be met.

When the Labour Party, headed by Ramsay MacDonald, came to power, Indian hopes were raised. Lord Irwin, who had become viceroy, declared the goal for India to be dominion status. This did not satisfy the Congress leaders who wanted to convene a constituent assembly to draft India's future constitution. The proposed Round Table Conference was boycotted by Congressmen and the disobedience movement was resumed with Gandhi's historic Dandi march. Meanwhile the Simon Commission report came through. It recommended the abolition of dyarchy in the provinces, an All India Federation, a strong centre and the evolution of self-government by usages and conventions, not by enactment of laws. The report was again condemned by Indians, and though some of its recommendations were embodied in the 1935 Act, for the moment the British government shelved it. The first and the second Round Table Conference followed, which brought nothing new. Meanwhile there was the Gandhi-Irwin pact, which did not work for long, as after his return from the second conference, Gandhi was arrested. As no agreement appeared to be forthcoming, Ramsay MacDonald announced the Communal Award in 1932. This provided representation for minorities like Muslims, Europeans, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Marathas and Anglo-Indians, and reiterated the principle of communal electorates. Special seats were allotted to representatives of trades e. g. commerce, industry, mining and

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so forth. Gandhi opposed the idea of a separate electorate for depressed classes and determined to fast to death on the issue. Ambedkar, leader of the depressed classes, exploited the situation, and the Poona Pact was signed in 1932 giving even greater representation to them. After the third Round Table Conference (17 November-23 December 1932) a White Paper was issued (1932) setting forth a scheme of dyarchy in the centre and autonomy in in the provinces. This was again condemned by Indians, but a Joint Select Committee of British Parliament went ahead and examined the proposals, which took final shape as the Government of India Act of 1935.

The Main Provisions of the Act of 1935

(a) *General*

At the centre the Act introduced dyarchy. Thus while the 1919 Act had created dyarchy in the provinces only, the 1935 Act abolished it there, but brought it on to the centre. The central government would consist of a federation of governor's provinces and those of the Indian states which had acceeded or may later on accede. It would include also the chief commissioner's provinces. The rulers of the states would accede by singing an instrument of accession. This implied that the joining of the federation by the states was not compulsory as in the case of the provinces. Moreover each ruler could also specify conditions under which he would join. Another precondition for the coming into existence of the federation was that rulers representing at least one half of the total population of all the states joined it. Besides it was not necessary that all the provisions of the Act would apply to the states which acceded. The obligation the acceding ruler incurred was to apply the provisions of the Act to his state 'so far as they are applicable therein by virtue of his instrument of accession'[1]

The provisions concerning Indian states were suicidal to the federation itself. The Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reforms had spoken of the ruling princes as 'the firm

1 Section VI (1) (b) of the Act.

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friends of British rule'. This friendship, it felt, had been often put to trial 'by decisions of the government of India running counter to what they (the rulers) believed to be the interests of their states and peoples.'[2] It was a little too much however to allow this friendship to wreck the federation, and it was much like killing the goose for the golden egg. Having been given an option, each ruler wanted to drive the hardest possible bargain. Many of them desired financial concessions and guarantees of revenues enjoyed in federal subjects, like customs, excise and salt tax, which obviously would completely erode the proposed federation. Linlithgow, on whom fell the task of working out the reforms, tried in vain to make them join. Of course his attempt too was mere window dressing, for among those he sent to persuade the princes was Sir Conrad Corfield, a firm believer in the states's sovereignty. The rulers, to whom democracy was anathema, refused to be drawn into a system in which not they, but the people, would have power. They lived in a retrograde, even fantastic, world of their own, 'organising exotic dances of nautch girls, lavish banquets, grand receptions and hunting expeditions.'[3] When the Prince of Wales visited India once, a Maharaja 'ordered that the water for His Royal Highness's tea must be boiled on a fire made of banknotes.'[4] No wonder they did not succumb to the temptation of joining the federation, but they did not firmly say 'no' either. To Linlithgow's circular asking for a positive decision, their association sent a vague and evasive reply. The terms offered were 'fundamentally unsatisfactory' they said, and therefore unacceptable. But it was their belief that 'it could not be the intention of His Majesty's government to close the door on an all India federation.'[5] By 1939 not a single big state had entered the federation.

The governor general would act as the Crown representative in respect of the Indian states and as the authority of the

2 Proceedings of the Committee, Vol. 1 Part I, 1934.
3 D.V. Tahmankar, *Sardar Patel*, George Allen and Unwin, 1970, p. 217.
4 Ibid.
5 H.V. Hodson, *The Great Divide*, Hutchinson, 1969, p. 56.

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Crown in British India in respect of the provinces. There was to be a threefold division of legislative powers and executive functions, viz. federal, provincial and concurrent. The distribution of functions was not devolved or delegated, as in the 1919 Act, but were original powers of the federation or the province, as the case might be.

(b) *The Federation*

Provided the conditions relating to the accession of the states were fulfilled, the federation would come into existence by a Royal Proclamation upon an address from both the houses of the British Parliament.

(i) *The Federal Executive*— The executive authority was to be exercised by the viceroy on behalf of the British monarch. Federal subjects were divided into the reserved and transferred. The reserved subjects (such as defence, ecclesiastical matters, administration of tribal areas, external affairs etc.) were to be administered by the viceroy assisted by counsellors not more than three in number. Transferred subjects were to be administered by the viceroy with the advice of his council of ministers consisting of not more than ten members. The ministers were appointed by the viceroy and held office during his pleasure. If not already a member of either house of the federal legislature, a minister had to become one within six months of being appointed.

In certain matters the viceroy's discretion was unfettered, subject only to any particular directions of the secretary of state. These matters were (i) those affecting peace and tranquillity, (ii) safeguarding financial stability and credit, (iii) safeguarding legitimate interests of minorities, (iv) safeguarding the rights of public servants and their departments, (v) ensuring protection against discrimination, (vi) preventing discriminatory or penal treatment of goods imported from Burma or the UK, (vii) protection of the rights of the Indian states and their rulers, and (viii) safeguarding his own discretionary powers. These were called in the Act the viceroy's 'special responsibilities.'

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(ii) *The federal legislature*—The federal legislature consisted of two chambers, the council of state and the federal assembly. The council was to have 156 representatives of British India and not more than 104 of Indian states. The assembly, 250 of British India and not more than 125 of the states. The council was to be a permanent body, one-third of its members retiring every three years, the representatives of British India upon it being directly elected. The assembly had a maximum life of five years, and indirect election for members representing British India. Representatives of Indian states would be chosen by their rulers. Communal representation was given to members of British India community-wise and interest-wise. Thus Muslims, Sikhs, Anglo-Indians and Christians were represented, the scheduled castes having a reserved quota from the general seats. In the assembly, representation was by population; in the council according to rank and importance.

The restrictions on the federal legislature were such that the viceroy could have his way invariably in most things. He could withhold his assent or reserve the bill for the signification of His Majesty's pleasure. He could return it for reconsideration. He could issueord inances on his own or enact what was known as the Governor General's Act, or he could ask the legislature to pass a law in the form desired by him. Acts passed on his own authority became law after being laid before the houses of Parliament. He could assume himself any of the federal powers (other than that of the federal court) if he thought it necessary to carry on the government.

(*iii*) *Procedure*—All proceedings were to be in English but persons insufficiently or wholly unacquainted with English could use another language. Rules of procedure could be made by either chamber. In certain matters, however, they were to be made by the viceroy in consultation with the president and the speaker. Examples of such matters would be : rules for cases in which the viceroy was empowered to legislate on his own ; securing timely completion of financial business ; forbidding discussions concerning states remaining out of the federation, prohibiting discussion involving relations of the Crown and the

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viceroy, foreign prince or state, personal conduct of rulers or their families, tribal affairs, and the discretion of the governor general in provincial matters; prohibiting criticism of judges; rules for joint sitting of the houses and for interrupting proceedings when it was in the interest of maintaining the the peace and tranquillity of India.

Normally a bill would require the sanction of both chambers and, if not connected with finance, could originate in either house. If passed by one chamber but rejected by the other, or if it was not presented in the second chamber within six months of its receipt, the governor general could, after consulting his ministers, call a joint sitting of the houses. After its passage the governor general could assent to it, withhold assent, or hold it reserved. He could return it for reconsideration. If the royal assent was not notified within twelve months a reserved bill would be dropped.

In financial matters the governor general would lay before the legislature a financial statement of receipts and expenditure. The estimates were to show the expenditure charged upon federal revenues, and sums required to meet other expenditure proposed to made from the revenues of the federation.[6] The former could be discussed but not voted upon. Estimates of other expenditure would be submitted as demands for grants, to both houses. Any grant which was rejected could be restored by the governor general on the plea of special responsibility.

(c) *The Provincial Government*

(i) *The Provincial Executive*—As in the case of the federation the executive authority in the provinces was to be vested in the governor who was the King's representative. His position in the province was much the same as that of the governor general in the federation except that he had no reserved departments

6 Expenditure charged upon the revenues of the federation included salaries and allowances of the viceroy, ministers, councillors, advocate-general, federal court and high court judges, expenditure on defence, external affairs, ecclesiastical matters, tribal and excluded areas and for management of Indian states.

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removed from the control of his ministers. He was also relieved of any responsibility for the financial stability of his province, though he may be required by the governor general to safeguard the stability of federal finances. The governor was to appoint and dismiss his ministers and fix their salaries until determined by the legislature.

The special responsibilities of governors would be as follows;

(i) Prevention of any grave menace to the peace and tranquillity of his province or any part of it,
(ii) the safeguarding of the legitimate interests of minorities,
(iii) safeguarding the rights of civil servants and their departments,
(iv) protection against discrimination in the executive sphere,
(v) maintenance of peace and good government in areas declared as 'partially excluded',
(vi) securing the rights of states and the rights and dignities of their rulers, and,
(vii) taking all measures necessary for the execution of orders given to him by the governor general in his discretion.

In all such cases the governor would take the views of his ministers, but act on his own individual judgement. Certain other powers over the police and in respect of 'persons determined to overthrow the government established by law', were given to him. This was done in order to strengthen the governor's hands in dealing with the civil disobedience campaign. In these matters he could use his individual discretion as he chose, and could authorise some official to speak (though not to vote) in the legislature or its committees.

Rules of business were to be framed by the governor after consulting his ministers. The finance minister would have a strong voice in all matters concerning finance. The governor was to particularly foster joint responsibility among his council of ministers and appoint as ministers those who had the confidence of the legislature.

(ii) *The Provincial Legislature*—The provincial legislature consisted of the governor and one or two chambers as laid down

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in the Act, There were two chambers in Madras, Bombay, Bengal, Bihar, Assam and the United Provinces, and one in the other provinces. Where there was a single chamber it was to be known as the legislative assembly and where two as the legislative council and the legislative assembly. The size of the chambers varied with the provinces, Muslims and other minorities being allotted due representation.

(iii) *Procedure*—The procedure in the provincial legislature was based on the federal model with only slight deviations. For instance in the case of the provinces as against the federation, a joint sitting of the two houses could be called by the governor only if a bill was not presented for assent within twelve months after it had been sent by one chamber to another. In the case of a finance bill the period could be shorter. The governor could assent to a bill, withhold his assent, or keep his decision in reserve. A bill would be reserved if it was repugnant to an Imperial Act, derogatory to the High Courts, affected the permanent settlement, or savoured of discrimination.

Financial bills too followed much the same procedure as in the case of the federation, and it will be needless to repeat it. The governor could issue ordinances at the instance of ministers when the legislature was not in session. Such ordinances would be for six months and could be extended for six months more. But except in an emergency the sanction of the governor general was to be obtained for their promulgation. The governor could, with the governor general's sanction, issue permanent acts, or by proclamation assume any powers needed in the event of a breakdown of the constitution in the province. Further he enjoyed a special position in respect of an excluded or partially excluded area defined as such by an order in council, or subsequently by the king in council.

(*iv*) *The Chief Commissioners's Provinces*—These were British Baluchistan, Delhi, Ajmer-Merwara, Coorg, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the area comprising Panth Piploda. These provinces were directly administered by the governor general acting through a chief commissioner appointed

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at his discretion. Normally the federal legislature exercised full authority over them.

Distribution of Subjects and the Relation Between the Federation and the Units

The constitution envisaged by the Act provided three lists—federal, provincial and concurrent. With the division of these subjects, a new element was introduced. Previously a provincial act assented to by the governor general could repeal a prior central act. With the coming into force of the threefold division, the position was that normally a federal act on a concurrent subject overrode a provincial act. But if the provincial act had been reserved and thereafter assented to by the governor general, it would prevail. The federal legislature could also regulate any provincial subject for two or more provinces on their request. But such an act could be varied or repealed by the provincial legislature. If any subject was not included in either list, the governor general could, after consulting the federal court if necessary, assign to the federation or province, powers to enact on such a subject. In an emergency affecting the security of India the governor general could make any law he chose, and the provinces had to follow it. But it had to get the approval of both the houses of Parliament within six months. The federation had unfettered discretion in legislation on the provincial list. In the case of the Indian states such discretion would be governed by the terms of accession. But the state could not pass any law against any federal legislation. The federal list included subjects like currency, coinage, posts and telegraphs, census, aircraft and air navigation, and so forth; the provincial list, subjects like education, agriculture, police, land revenue, local government etc; in the concurrent list came criminal and civil law, factories, trusts, stamp duties (with some exceptions), newspaper, books and periodicals, and so forth.

The relation between federation and the units was built on the principle that due respect should be secured for the federal laws, and at the same time the interests of the provinces and the acceding states should be preserved. The position of the

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governor general was supreme, for the reformers had felt that central authority had constantly been eroded after the Act of 1919, and a strong centre was now essential for the success of federation. The Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reforms, 1934, had observed :

'As our inquiries have proceeded, we have been increasingly impressed, not by the strength of the central government but by its weakness. It is confronted by a legislature which can be nothing but (in Bagehot's words) "a debating society adhering to an executive."... the prestige of the central government has been lowered and disharmony between the government and the legislature has tended to sap the efficiency of both. Indeed, the main problem which, in this sphere, Parliament has now to consider is how to strengthen a already weakened central executive.'[7]

One can read an element of anger and frustration in these words. True, a number of unpleasant incidents intervened between the 1919 and the 1935 reforms, like the Rowlatt Act, Chauri Chaura and the Dandi march. But these were not the consequences of the weakness of the chief executive in relation to the legislature. Rather they were due to the unbridled strength of his own diehard civil servants who had sabotaged the scheme of reforms in 1919 and had made a joint effort to wreck them again in 1935. It was they who had perpetrated acts which no civilised people could tolerate. In fact what the British needed was not a stronger executive but a more sensible bureaucracy.

It was provided in the 1935 Act that the governor general could direct any governor to function as his agent in respect of defence, foreign affairs, ecclestiastical affairs and tribal areas. Provincial officers could be asked to carry out duties necessary in dealing with federal matters which embraced the provinces. The cost of such administration would be defrayed by the centre. Moreover the provincial executive authority was to ensure that it did not interfere with federal authority. The directions to this end could be given by the

7 C.H. Philips, *The Evolution of India and Pakistan*, Select Documents, Oxford, 1962, pp. 312-3.

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centre. This was doubtless an encroachment upon provincial autonomy. The federation could acquire provincial land, give directions to provinces for carrying out works necessary for communication, defence and so forth and the governor was bound to comply even if his ministers objected. The governor general could also give the governor any order relating to the maintenance of peace and tranquillity—another negation of provincial autonomy. In cases of any intra-provincial dispute of irrigation, water supply etc., the governor general appointed a commission of experts which would decide the matter, unless the province or state asked for a decision by the king in council.

In case of acceding states the governor general could ask the ruler to bring the administration in line with federal policy. The executive authority of the ruler would not be used to impede the exercise of federal authority under law. If the governor general considered it needful he could hear the views of the ruler on any point of such dispute, and then issue directions which had to be complied.

A vexed problem which the reformers had to face was that of assigning revenues and finance between the federation and its units. Certain provinces were so placed that their expenditure was not likely to be met out of their revenues. Bengal, for example, pressed for increased share in income tax. Octroi and frontier duties were opposed to the interest of free trade. But these and certain other minor sources of revenue, the provinces were reluctant to give up. It was clear that the centre would have to assist substantially deficit provinces and its resources would be seriously affected. The reformers, therefore, made allowance for these factors.

Duties in respect of succession of property other than agricultural land, stamp duties on the federal list, terminal taxes on goods or passengers carried by rail or air and taxes on railway fares and freight, were to be collected by the federation but shared by provinces and the federated states. Income tax was to be levied by the centre and a certain proportion of it assigned to the units. But the original proportion fixed was not to be increased and the federation could retain the whole of the proceeds of any surcharge which it might levy. The centre could also retain each year the contribution payable to

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the units according to a diminishing graduated scale. Part of the income of companies (not agricultural income) could be taken by the centre. Salt duties and federal excise duties were be levied and collected by the federation, the whole or part being distributed to the units. In case of export duty on jute a larger share was assigned to the province which produced it. Apart from these the federation could impose customs duties, taxes on the capital value of assets (not agricultural land) of individuals and companies, and taxes on the capital of companies.

Grants of funds could be made to provinces needing assistance, but except for the NWFP such grants could not be increased unless a request was made for it by both chambers of the legislature.

For Indian states terms were more liberal, so as to encourage them to join the union. Cash contributions which states had to pay could be remitted by the federation over a twenty years period. States would be paid sums the federation thought fit, if the state had in the past ceded territory in return for its discharge from obligation to render military assistance or for specified military guarantees, provided it waived these guarantees. Other privileges and immunities were also provided to them like the levying of sea customs, production and sale of untaxed salt, free service stamps and free carriage of government mails, exemption of customs duty on goods imported by sea, the right to issue currency notes and so forth.

The Reserve Bank of India which started operating from 1935 controlled currency and credit, issued banknotes and maintained reserves. Borrowing was permitted both to the federation as well as to the provinces. The federation could issueloans to provinces or guarantee their loans. But the provinces could not borrow outside India.

The Secretary of State

The office of the secretary of state was created by an Act of 1858 when, after the Indian revolt, the Board of Directors and the Board of Control of the East India Company were

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abolished. The secretary of state was a member of the British cabinet and was assisted by a parliamentary under secretary, (a permanent under secretary) an advisory council and the India Office. The Act of 1919 provided that the secretary of state would be paid from the British treasury, whereas before he was being paid from Indian revenues.

The change in the set up of the secretary of state introduced by the Act of 1935 was that instead of the erstwhile Indian council which was established in 1958 to assist him, there would now be a body of advisers. The secretary of state in council (the council having from eight to twelve members) was a corporate body to the government of India. The council was purely advisory, though in matters relating to grants from Indian revenues, contracts, and the civil services, its advice was to be acted upon. The Act of 1936 provided that instead of the council of the secretary of state, there should be three to six advisers, whose duty was to advise the secretary of state on any matter on which he desired their advice. The condition prescribed for them under section CCLXXVIII were :

'One-half at least of the persons for the time being holding office under this section as advisers of the secretary of the state shall be persons who have held office for at least ten years under the Crown in India and have not last ceased to perform in India official duties under the Crown more than two years before the date of their respective appointments as advisers under this section.

'Any person appointed as an adviser to the secretary of state shall hold office for a term of five years and shall not be eligible for reappointment.

'A person for the time being holding office as adviser to the secretary of state shall not be capable of sitting or voting in either of the Houses of Parliament.'[8]

With the coming into force of the 1935 Act, which aimed to introduce provincial autonomy and dyarchy at the centre, theoretically the secretary of state was denuded of authority. A council of ministers came into being at the centre, but in

8 C.H. Philips, *The Evolution of India and Pakistan, Select Documents*. Oxford, 1962, p. 333.

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practice the governor general was not much affected in his power by its existence. The ministersde pended for their appointment on him and held office at his pleasure. There were many important matters on which he need not consult them at all. He presided over the meeting of the council of ministers. The secretary of state controlled the governor general, and since the control of the governor general in the centre and through him of the governors in the states was in no manner less than before, the secretary of state in practice became more powerful, not less. He had full control over reserved subjects e.g. defence, external affairs etc., and over financial matters. The civil services were entirely in his hands. He was the agent of the British Parliament, and the constitutional adviser of the Crown in Indian affairs. It would be wrong to imagine that the Act of 1935 diminished his powers in any way. If there was any change, it was in making him stronger. He still was as Professor K.T. Shah says 'the most dominating authority in the Indian constitution.'[9]

The High Commissioner for India

The office of the high commissioner was provided for in the Act of 1919 and established in 1920. His work was essentially non political. He represented India in international conferences, procured stores for Indian governments, furnished trade information and arranged education of Indian students abroad. He was under the direct control of the governor general and could be authorised to act for provinces or for any of the federated states.

The Judicature

A federal court was established consisting of a chief justice of India and other judges, the puisne judges not exceeding six.[10] The judges were appointed by the King and held office till the

9 K.T. Shah, *Federal Structure*, p. 386.

10 The federal legislature could present an address to the governors general to increae the number.

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age of sixty-five years. The federal court decided disputes between the federation and the provinces or federated states (certain matters, mentioned in section CCIV of the Act, being excepted). In the exercise of its original jurisdiction the court pronounced only a declaratory judgement, though the parties would follow its directions. As an appellate court it heard appeals against decisions of High Courts. An appeal in certain matters lay from decisions of the federal court to His Majesty in council. This was by leave of the federal court or of His Majesty in council, except when the federal court decided in the exercise of its orginal jurisdiction, disputes concerning interpretation of the Act, or of an order in council made under it, or arising from the terms of the instrument of accession of a state, or relating to the administration of a federal law in a state. In these cases no leave for appeal was needed. The governor general could also obtain the opinion of the federal court in matters of public importance.

Evaluation : Communal Electorates : Extent of Autonomy

(i) *Communal Electorates*—It has already been pointed out that communal electorates were continued by the 1935 Act, despite strong views against it expressed by the Select Committee. The Minto-Morley reforms of 1909 brought up the question of giving separate electorates to the Muslims. Because of the large scale agitations of civil disobedience and non-cooperation started later by the Congress under Gandhi's leadership, a wrong impression is likely to be created that it was the Hindus who took up agitational methods. This was not so. It was the Muslims who, worked up over the Bengal partition, began to agitate for separate representation. And it had its effect. On 11 October 1906 Morley had written to Minto : 'McMohan, who had plenty to do with the Mohammedans, thinks not well of them as an element in a state : they are absolutely moveless, and without any principle of reform in them : much more chance from the Hindus, heathen as they

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are. So said he.'[11] Yet barely a week later we find Minto observing: 'I entirely agree with you (Godley) as to the value of the recent Mohammedan demonstrations. They have been most fortunate and have really done much to save the position, for, as you say, they will be a useful reminder to the people in England that the Bengali is not everybody in India; in fact the Mohammedan community, when aroused, would be a much stronger and more dangerous factor to deal with than the Bengalis.'[12] This makes two things clear, that the Mohammedan agitation had more impact on British rulers than that of the Hindus, and secondly they considered the agitation God-sent; 'fortunate', as the viceroy said. The British administrators were quick to seize the chance of sowing division between the two communities. In the reforms act of 1909 separate electorates for Muslims were introduced. It was the start of the process of dismemberment. In 1919 the Sikhs got separate electorates and in the Act of 1935 Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, Europeans and the scheduled castes got them. The end of this chain was of course Pakistan. The 1919 reforms gave communal representation to Sikhs and Europeans in addition to Muslims. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report on Communal Electorates, 1918, repeated the sentiments expressed by Lord Minto a decade back: 'The Mohammedans regard these (communal electorates and communal representation) as settled facts, and any attempt to go back on them would raise a storm of bitter protest and put a severe strain on the loyalty of a community which has behaved with conspicuous loyalty during a period of very great difficulty...'[13] 'At the same time, the Report said, 'The British government is often accused of dividing men in order to govern them. But if it unnecessarily divides them at the very moment when it professes to start them on the road to governing themselves, it will find it difficult to meet the charge of being hypocritical

11 C.H. Philips, *The Evolution of India and Pakistan Select Documents*, Oxford 1962, p. 194 (Morley papers).

12 Ibid, p. 194 (Lord Minto to Sir Arthur Godley on the value of recent Mohammedan demonstrations, 17 October, 1906, Minto Papers).

13 Ibid, p. 209 (Report on the Indian Constitutional Reforms, 1918).

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or short-sighted.'[14] In the true English spirit the reforms condemned communal electorates, but still thought it was all right to apply them to India. The attitude recalls Shaw's remark : 'You will never find an Englishman in the wrong. He does everything on principle. He fights you on patriotic principles; he robs you on business principles; he enslaves you on imperial principles.'[15] But it was not the English administrators alone who were responsible for communal electorates. It was Indian themselves who failed to remain united. The fundamental differences between Hindus and Muslims—which were stressed not only by the British but by Indians too, as for example, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Jinnah and the Mahasabha leaders—were of course real. Still there could be many nationalist Muslims, like Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad. Such secular understanding required enlightenment and broad-mindedness, which could only remain rare. The general run of Hindus and Muslims could not be expected to rise to such a peak of understanding. The British rulers only accentuated the differences. They watered the seed of communalism till it grew up into a huge tree. But it could not have grown if the seed was not already there.

The 1935 Act continued the concept of communal electorates. In fact it extended it to scheduled castes, Indian Christians and Anglo-Indians also. The Joint Committee sang the same tune of Hindu Muslim diversity as before :

'...we are confronted with the age-old antagonism of Hindu and Mohammedan, representatives not only of two religions but of two civilizations; with numerous self-contained and exclusive minorities, all a prey to anxiety for their future, and profoundly suspicious of the majority and of one another...'[16] Therefore, concluded the Report, British parliamentary democracy was incompatible with Indian conditions, and there had to be communal safeguards. Early nineteenth century reforms in India depict the British determination to exploit Indian

14 Ibid, p. 209.
15 George Bernard Shaw, *The Man of Destiny.*
16 C.H. Philips, *The Evolution of India and Pakistan, Select Documents,* Oxford, 1962, p. 308.

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wranglings and so bring the different sections more apart, till a stage was ultimately reached when they could never come together again.

(ii) *Extent of Autonomy*—Nehru aptly described the new constitution established by the 1935 Act as 'a machine with strong brakes but no engine.' By 1935 the Bri.ish rulers felt that the car of Indian autonomy had been going a little too fast for their liking. So they put in a governor to check its speed. This was in the shape of a strong executive. The Joint Select Committee made no bones about it. 'There must be' they observed 'an executive power in each province which can step in and save the situation before it is too late.'[17] Doubtless they were thinking of events which had intervened between 1919 and 1935. But in these, the situation sometimes went beyond control not because of any lack of strength in the executive power; it was rather because of tactless and often apathetic handling. The reformers in fact wished to appear to give autonomy, and yet not to give it. It was much like the custom observed by a British government officer when visiting an Indian village. The village folk would reverently offer him a gold sovereign which he would touch and return. In the same way autonomy was a token gift. As the Joint Committee Report said it was useless unless it preserved the greatest blessing of British rule, which was unity of India. This unity was being weakened. So provincial autonomy was 'an inconceivable policy unless it was accompanied by such an adaptation of the structure of the central legislature as will bind these autonomous units together...'[18] Apart from strengthening the executive, this binding together was to be accomplished by bringing the Indian states into the federation. But the reformers gave such options in this to the rulers, that, for the moment, the entry of states remained a dream. In fact it turned out to be the chief cause of the unworkableness of the reforms.

Having experimented with dyarchy in the provinces and being

17 Ibid, p. 309.

18 C.H. Philips, *Select Documents*, Oxford 1962, p. 310 (Proceedings of the Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reforms).

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fully aware of its ills, it is a million dollar question why the reformers again introduced it in the centre. It sounded like a subterfuge to conceal the autocratic nature of the government, the sugar-coating for the bitter pill of the executive head's overbearing authority. A semblance of autonomy was created with the council of ministers at the centre, and legislatures in the central and provincial governments, which could discuss almost everything but decide nothing which the governors or the governor general did not want them to. The assemblies were more devices to let off steam than to legislate for national ends.

(iii) *Appraisement*—The various political parties reacted unfavourably to the Act of 1935. Even Jinnah, at whose insistence communal representation to Muslims was given, condemned it as 'thoroughly rotten, fundamentally bad and totally unacceptable'. Chintamani called the Act 'ill-balanced' and denying 'powers which are vital to every government worth the name.' Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya said it was outwardly democratic, but 'absolutely hollow from inside.' Rajagopalachari called it 'worse than dyarchy'. Another critic called it a 'grim joke'. When the Bill was presented in Parliament' Attlee was censorious of the scheme of 'indirect communal elections' incorporated in it. 'The electing chambers' he said 'are split on communal lines. The Bill makes the worst of most worlds.'[19] His other objections were (i) That the Bill 'is deliberately framed to exclude as far as possible the Congress from effective powers' by giving 'undue weight to the princes.' (ii) Those who have been sentenced to prison have been excluded. (iii) It would create 'a barren opposition.' (iv) There were too many safeguards. (v) Representation has been given to persons of wealth privilege and power, and not to the poorer classes who form the overwhelming majority.[20]

The Act did not really concede any self-government. Parliamentary control through the secretary of state and the viceroy

19 C.H. Philips, *Select Documents*, Oxford 1962, pp. 318-20 (Attlee's Speech on the Government of India Bill, 4 June 1935).
20 Ibid.

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and governors was maintained, and it was they who continued to fully control all important administrative services. The constitution could neither be changed nor amended. Indirect elections and communal representation cut at the roots of democracy. Provincial autonomy, which it professed to guarantee, was, as critics observed, 'a sham' and 'farce far from reality'. Fazl-ul-Haq, who became premier of Bengal after the elections held in pursuance of the Act, said that the Act envisaged 'neither a Hindu Raj, nor a Muslim Raj, but the British Raj.'[21] The states had the option to enter the federation or to keep away from it. If they kept away they would impede the formation of a united India which was considered to be the primary objective of the Act. If they joined it would be on their own terms, and each state would be a law unto itself. The princes, being absolutely under the control of the political department of the Indian government, they would do as the British administrators wished them to. The states's representatives on the legislatures would really be the British government's men, a strong block, which the rulers could use to their advantage.

The only good which came out of the Act of 1935 and the subsequent ministries formed as a consequence, was that the Indian leaders, who until now had experience of agitating, got trained in the art of administration. The two, of course, are very different, and often opposed, as the leaders who became premiers and ministers, found to their consternation. Now they had to preserve law and order not to defy it, to create not to criticise, to make laws not to break them. Despite the hurdles created by the provisions of the Act, they carried out the task of administration reasonably well.[22] The federation, however, failed to materialise. Even the ministries soon came to an end in 1939 when they resigned as a protest against the British government's unilateral decision to declare India a party to the world war. The later progress of reforms, involving the Cripps proposals, the Cabinet Mission and the

21 The Indian Annual Register, 1937, Vol. 2, p. 411.

22 The working of the reform has already been narrated. (See under *Lord Linlithgow*).

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ultimate partition of India have already been narrated.[23] The cry changed from dominion status to complete independence, *purna swaraj*, as Mahatma Gandhi called it. Independence, when it did come, had the Shakespearian quality of mercy which 'blesseth him that gives and him that takes.' The English were glad to get rid of India, as much as the Indians to get rid of them; the Indians to shake off an alien rule, the British to end a burden which had ceased to be profitable, The harbingers of freedom rejoiced, although it is doubtful if they would have done so had they lived long enough to see the achievements of that freedom. But that is a later story.

23 See under the respective governors general.

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5

Anglo-Afghan Relations

'The English have encroached upon my possessions, Quetta has been taken up as a permanent military station by them without my consent, according to what rules of friendship, and in accordance to what treaty? Strange treaty indeed! Is such the good faith of all Powers? First to make a treaty, and then to enter the possessions of others without their consent!'

Sher Ali, Amir of Afghanistan

The earlier part of Anglo-Afghan relations has been narrated under the events occurring in the periods of the governors general concerned viz. Auckland and Ellenborough.[1] Lord Auckland's aggressive policy had resulted in the disastrous First Afghan War, and the exit of Shah Shuja, whom the English had backed. Dost Mohammed, who became governor general in 1869 was plagued by the danger of Russian expansion in central Asia. There were two schools of thought existing at this time in regard to Afghan policy. One, represented by Major Jacob, Green and Henry Rawlinson, favoured a strong approach and wanted the occupation of Quetta to

1 See author's *A History of Indian Civilisation* volume 3 Part I in this series under the chapters on the governors general concerned (Ess Ess Pubs).

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check any possible Russian advance. In his memorandum on Central Asia (20 July 1868) Rawlinson wrote 'nothing can prevent the extinction of the three independent governments of Kokand, Bokhara and Khiva, and the consequent extension of the Russian frontier to the Oxus.'[2] He concluded therefore : 'In the interests of peace...it may be asserted that interference in Afghanistan has now become a duty...'[3] The other school represented by Herbert Edwards and Harry Lumsden, believed in strengthening Afghanistan, without creating any panic in the minds of Afghans of hostile intentions from the British side. Lawrence pondered over these two possible courses of action and decided on what is usually termed the policy of 'masterly inactivity.' This policy was, in his own words, 'friendship towards the actual rulers combined with rigid abstentions from interference in domestic feuds'. 'By this means', he said 'we shall be enabled to maintain our influence in Afghanistan far more effectually than any advance of our troops—a contingency which could only be contemplated in the last resort, which would unite as one man the Afghan tribes against us, and which would paralyse our finances.' When Dost Mohammed died in 1863 leaving sixteen sons, and a complicated war of succession emerged, Lawrence favourably reacted to Sher Ali, but in the intrigues which followed, he refused to get himself involved, in the light of his policy of non-interference in domestic feuds.

There is much for and against Lawrence's policy. The plus points seem to be (i) It would not unduly frighten the Afghans and drive them to seek Russian aid. As Lawrence observed, 'the first invaders of Afghanistan would be received as foes and the next would be hailed as friends and deliverers.' (ii) Knowing the Afghans well, Lawrence realised that they could be good friends but dangerous enemies. Being hardy and warlike, any British force sent against them would be involved in bitter and effective resistance, as the First Afghan War had shown. (iii) Active interference in Afghan domestic affairs

2 Parliament Papers, Afghanistan (1878-9), Rawlinson was a member of the Council of India in 1858-9 and 1868-95.

3 Ibid.

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would mean that at times the British would have to support weak Afghan rulers. The result of this had already been proved to be disastrous, as when they supported the unpopular Shah Shuja as against Dost Mohammed. (iv) The policy stood the test of time. Auckland, and later Lytton, who departed from it, involved the country in costly and on the whole unnecessary and profitless wars. The disadvantages could be summarised as follows : (i) Afghan rulers could hardly rely on such uncertain assistance from the English which changed as Roberts says 'like the vane of a weathercock' according as the wind blew. (ii) Lack of British support created diffidence in the minds of Afghan rulers and, as Abdur Rehman actually did, made them take refuge with Russians. It could hardly be expected of rulers like Sher Ali to be friendly, when they were let down at critical moments. (iii) Lawrence's idea was to have an understanding with Russia about central Asia rather than force the issue by actively assisting Afghanistan. But Russia could easily interpret this as a sign of English weakness, as indeed she did later on. Thus Lawrence's policy could be categorised as 'weak and vacillating.'

Considering all factors Lawrence's policy was well advised. The Russian invasion, which continued to haunt English minds, was a myth. It provided the British a good excuse whenever they chose to extend their influence north-west, but Lawrence rightly conceived it as being unlikely. His policy was not one of complete inactivity. He always kept a watchful eye on Afghanistan and maintained a strong Indian frontier. At the same time he supplied Sher Ali arms and money. A war with Afghanistan would have meant more taxation when Indians were already reeling under the adverse financial effects of Auckland's frontier exploits. When later on Lord Lytton reversed Lawrence's policy there was trouble. This in itself was proof that the policy was the right one. It was neither an attitude of despair nor one of defiance. It was sound practical wisdom which maintained peace with honour and dignity.

Lawrence's policy was continued in essence by his successors Lord Mayo and Lord Northbrook. When Dost Mohammed had died in 1863 the question of succession between his sixteen

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sons had become a vexed one. And as in all such cases, particularly with the frontier tribes, it was more likely to be decided by the sword. Before his death, Dost Mohammed had chosen Sher Ali to succeeed him. After Sher Ali became Amir, Lord Canning immediately gave him his recognition. When Lawrence became governor general, Sher Ali approached him to renew the old treaty concluded between his father and the British. Although Lawrence sympathised with him, and even with his request for recognition of his son Mohammed Ali as heir, his policy of neutrality forbade him from doing anything more, In fact when Afzal, Sher Ali's brother, captured Kabul and Kandahar, Lawrence promptly recognised him as ruler of these provinces, and accepted Sher Ali as ruler of Herat.[4] When Afzal died in 1867 and his younger brother Azim Khan succeeded, Lawrence recognised him as well.

Sher Ali was proud and sensitive, and quick to take offence on being spurned, but he was clear headed and consistent in his grasp of events domestic and foreign. He had to keep his turbulent tribesmen contented, for with so many rival claimants his place on the throne was shaky. At the same time his kingdom was sandwiched between two powerful nations who were at loggerheads with each other. He preferred to have British friendship, but with his astuteness he soon found out that they were only interested in him as a pawn in the European game. It is true Lawrence sent him off and on a few guns and a handful of gold, but more as a token of goodwill than of real help. Moreover he was just as friendly to his rivals, and as the saying goes, 'A friend to everybody is a friend to nobody.' Since the English did not come to his aid, the best thing for him, as he rightly thought, was to keep away from outside entanglements. But that was precisely what neither the English nor the Russians allowed him to do. Another thing he was clear about was that his people wanted no Europeans entrenched in their country. In this again he found himself in a quandary, for first the English and then the Russians began to thrust

4 There were four main provinces in Afghanistan—Afghan Turkestan, Kabul, Kandahar and Herat—all of them enjoying a considerable degree of autonomy.

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their 'missions' upon him. The Afghans were themselves so steeped in treachery, that they did not need to be told what it meant. They could smell it a mile off. They knew fully well that 'a mission' was a Trojan horse, and they would not for the world get it inside their city gates.

Sher Ali had to deal successively with four viceroys before he became involved in the ill-fated Second Afghan War. Lawrence, as we have seen, gave him the cold shoulder. Mayo, the only viceroy whom Sher Ali met in person, arranged a huge durbar in his honour at Ambala. All that Sher Ali got as a reward of his visit was 'moral support' in case of need, with a categorical refusal to any subsidy, treaty or recognition of heirship. Sher Ali was back in Afghanistan, a sadder and wiser man. While appreciating British moral support, he knew it would be a poor weapon against Russia's sophisticated rifles. By the time Northbrook took over as viceroy (1872) Russia was steadily advancing towards the Afghan border. In 1873 she occupied Khiva in central Asia. Thoroughly alarmed, Sher Ali asked for English help. Northbrook thought this quite reasonable and proposed giving arms, men and troops, provided Sher Ali 'unreservedly accepts and acts on our advice in all external relations.' But the proposal was turned down by the home government. On the contrary Lord Salisbury, the foreign secretary, desired that a mission should be permanently maintained in Herat because the information coming from the Indian agent at Kabul was inaccurate. At this moment (in 1875) the situation in Europe had its influence on Afghan relations. England sent an Indian contingent of five thousand men to Malta fearing that Russia wished to gain control of the Dardanelles. As a retaliation Russia despatched three columns totalling fifteen thousand troops to the Oxus river to establish Russian control between it and the Hindu Kush mountains.

Lord Lytton succeeded Northbrook who had resigned after a clash with the secretary of state on Afghan policy, and with him there was a complete reversal of the Lawerence stand. The British made a secret agreement with the Khan of Kalat by which a garrison was to be located permanently in Quetta. When Sher Ali learnt about this, his distrust of the British reached a high mark. In despair he turned to Russia. An

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attempt to find a solution was made by him with the British also but without success. A conference was held at Peshawar to which he sent a delegate. Unfortunately the delegate died, and even though Sher Ali nominated a successor who was already on the way, Lytton called the meeting off. His move to woo Russia created an even worse situation for him. The Russians promptly sent off a mission headed by General Stoletoff. Sher Ali's nephew, Abdur Rehman, had taken refuge in Bokhara and was canvassing for Russian aid to obtain the throne, so the Amir was in no position to refuse the mission despite the fact that he had said no to a proposed British resident at Kabul. Sher Ali was in an awful predicament. He wanted no European missions or agents and here were two big European powers forcing them on him. The reason why he didn't want them, apart from the fact that his subjects, being averse to Europeans, would censure him, was that he felt he could not under the circumstances guarantee their safe conduct. 'I tell them (the English) he said, that for their agents to reside within my territories was not desirable, owing to the extreme bigotry of my subjects. God forbid, if any of their agents were assassinated, they would at once come down upon me, and charge me with being their instigator. In this country of Afghans I am myself surrounded with enemies, who desire nothing better than my ruin, and would designedly be guilty of acts of violence for which I would be held responsible.'[5] But neither the English nor the Russians cared anything for the Amir's difficulties. Disraeli, the new British prime minister was obsessed by Russiophobia, and Lytton was briefed to take the hard line with Afghanistan. It was the ideal combination for an aggressive policy—Disraeli the Russiophobe and Lytton the imperialist. 'Afghanistan' wrote the viceroy to the resident at Nepal 'is a state far too weak and barbarous to remain isolated, and wholly uninfluenced, between two great military empires such as England and Russia.'[6] It was for him 'an earthen

5 C.H. Philips, *Select Documents*, Oxford, 1962, p. 452 (Interview of the Turkish Mission with the Amir of Kabul, Sept. & Oct. 1877).

6 Lord Lytton to C. Girdlestone, 27 August 1876, Lytton Papers. Private letter.

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pipkin between two metal pots.' That was the trouble about the British. With the exception of a few of them who had direct experience, they never really understood Afghanistan. The Afghans were small in number but they made up for it by their warlike hardiness. And they were unpredictable, for they struck just when the enemy was exulting in the flow of victory.

When the Russian mission arrived (Sher Ali had tried to delay them as much as he could), they were kept confined and closely guarded in the Residency in the Bala Hissar. Soon, however, much to the Amir's relief, the treaty of Berlin was signed in Europe and the Russians hurriedly left.

That could have been the end of the matter were it not for British obduracy. Lord Lytton wrote to the secretary of state :

> 'From our commanding position at Quetta we could now at any moment lay our hands swiftly upon Kandahar, where our superior weapons and organisation would sweep away, like flies, the badly armed, badly drilled and badly disciplined troops the Amir could oppose to us.'[7]

A mission under General Chamberlain was sent despite the fact that the Russians had left, and in utter disregard of Sher Ali's sentiments, for his favourite son and heir had in the meantime died. Chamberlain sent Cavagnari, the enthusiastic assistant commissioner of Peshwar, along with a small escort, to secure a passage through the Khyber pass. Cavagnari asked the Afghan commander there to allow the mission to proceed. The commander politely but firmly told him sorry he had no orders, and made it clear he would oppose any attempt to get through. Seeing the tall Afridi tribesmen ready to act at a word from their commander, the discreet assistant commissioner gave the Afghan chief a quick handshake and left. The Chamberlain mission was called off.

Sher Ali naturally resented a mission being sent behind his back. The Russian mission had been forced upon him, and

7 Dilip Kumar Ghose, *England and Afghanistan*, Calcutta, 1960, p. 42 *op. cit.*

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circumstances had led him to give it permission. But there is no evidence to show, as some historians think, that the Amir had ever tried to enter into a Russian alliance. Prince Lebanoff the Russian ambassador in London had told Granville in 1881 that 'Sher Ali was neither Russian nor English but an Afghan, desirous of preserving the independence of his country'.[8] All that Sher Ali desired was to be let alone. But he was the victim of an eternal tussle for aggrandisement by two big nations each wanting to establish its influence in this strategic region. As Seneca says : 'He whose power is too great desires always the power that is not his'.[9]

On 20 November 1878 three British forces advanced into Afghanistan. Kandahar was occupied without any resistance. Another attack through the Khyber pass led to the fall of Ali Masjid and Jalalabad. Roberts, who led a column via the Khurram pass, had to put up with some hard fighting before he could take Peiwar Kotal. The Afghans fled from the Shutargardan pass and the road to Kabul lay open. Meanwhile Sher Ali suddenly died on 21 February 1879. A treaty was concluded at Gandamak on 26 May 1879 with his son, Yakub. The British got control over the Khyber and Mishni passes and the administration of the districts of Kurram, Pishin and Sibi. They promised to support the Amir against foreign aggression provided he acted on their advice in foreign affairs and agreed to accept a permanent envoy at Kabul. The Amir was also granted an annual subsidy of six lakh rupees. The treaty is regarded by some critics as the high watermark of Lord Lytton's Afghan policy inasmuch as it secured a scientific frontier. Like every watermark, however, it remained a mark only after the flood waters flowed back. The acquisitions were short-lived and they didn't extend to any frontier which could be termed scientific. Gandamak was an uneasy peace thrust upon the Afghans. But what the British thought

8 *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, 1963, Vol. IX, p. 692 (Col. H.B. Hannah, *The Second Afghan War*, London, 1910, Vol. 1, p. 91).

9 Seneca, *Phaedra*, 220 (*The Nurse*). Quod non potest, vult posse, qui nimium potest.

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was victory, was to them only a brief respite before the Afghan bid for independence began again.

The British troops had never been closer to within fifty miles of Kabul, and victory over the Afghans could not by any means be called as complete. Cavagnari, who was appointed agent, installed himself with a small escort in Bala Hissar. He kept sending glowing reports about the success of his policy with the Amir and of the restortation of calm, and the universal support the Afghans were giving him. On 2 September 1879 he sent off a brief cable to Lytton which said 'All well.' Little did he know it was the last message he would ever send, for the very next day the Afghan soldiers who were discontented and frustrated when their arrears of pay was denied them, broke into a riot. The gates of the Residency were pulled down and the building set on fire. Cavagnari and all his staff and troops were killed. The British forces which were on the way back, returned on getting news of the disaster. They were again desperately involved in fighting the Afghans, this time not merely to retrieve their prestige, but also for revenge. Kandahar was reoccupied, the Shutargardan pass seized, and Roberts occupied Kabul. Eighty-seven Afghans who were considered to be the ringleaders were executed, and Yakub abdicated throne. There was, however, an uprising under Mohammed Jan. The British troops were repulsed and took shelter in the Sherpur cantonments. Ayub Khan, brother of Yakub, who was in possession of Herat made a bid for Kandahar. General Burrows was defeated by him at Maiwand with over a thousand of his troops killed or missing. The remaining British force fled to the fortress of Kandahar which was besieged by Ayub. Hearing of this serious reverse Roberts marched with a huge army of 10,000 to relieve Kandahar. The seige was raised, and the opposition of the Afghans was at an end. A number of barbarities were committed by the British troops on a much larger scale than any revenge for Cavagnari could possibly justify and which 'sickened London'.[10] These included indiscriminate hanging,

10 Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India*, Oxford, 1977, p. 255.

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burning of villages and wholesale executions on the most trivial evidence. It was, as could be expected, a costly war, the approximate expenditure being near about eighteen million, the burden of all of which of course the Indian taxpayer had to bear.

As a result of the war, the British government installed as Amir, Abdur Rehman, nephew of Sher Ali and a grandson of Dost Mohammed. Lytton was not happy with the choice in view of Abdur Rehman's Russian associations and because of his having a strong personality, but ere the viceroy could oppose him he was succeeded by Lord Ripon. The final position which emerged was as follows. Pishin and Sibi were retained (despite a promise made by the home government to the contrary). Abdur Rehman was to have no relations with any foreign powers save with the approval of the government of India. The Amir was promised British assistance in case of any unprovoked outside attack. Abdur Rehman accepted these terms in a conference at Zimma in 1880. Three years later he was also granted a subsidy of twelve lakh of rupees.

The Second Afghan War was result of Lytton's designs for British expansion for which the Russian danger was taken as an excuse. In his letter to Girdlestone, the Nepal resident, he had written: 'We do not covet one inch of his (the Amir's) territory; we do not desire to diminish one iota of his independence. But we cannot allow him to fall under the influence of any power whose interests are antagonistic to our own...'[11] Despite this, the viceroy, as we have seen, rushed through an attack even when Sher Ali had not carried on any negotiations with Russia. In fact instead of welcoming the Russian mission he had tried to avoid it, failing that to delay it, and when it came, kept it shut up in the Residency at Bala Hissar. After the treaty of Berlin, which soon followed, the Russians had left. That put an end to any fear of Russian involvement in Afghanistan. Had Russia been the reason for the viceroy's intervention no further step was required to be taken. But Chamberlain

11 Lord Lytton to C. Girdlestone, 27 August 1876.

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was post-haste sent to create trouble, so that the Amir might provide a casus belli for war. In outlining his frontier policy Lytton had written 'As a purely military line the strongest frontier we could take up would be along the Hindu Kush from the Pamir to Bamian, holding the northern debouches of the principal passes; and thence southwards by the Helmund, Girishk and Gandahar to the Arabian sea'.[12] This would mean almost the entire area which is now covered by Pakistan plus almost half of Afghanistan itself! What could contemplation of such a frontier imply, if not conquest?

If the Chamberlain mission had not been sent a war could easily have been avoided. The huge cost and loss of life which it entailed got the British only two small districts, a very little gain for much hard endeavour. Two points are sometimes urged in favour of the war. It is said that 'it was a direct consequence of the Second Afghan War...that the British were able to intervene decisively and so forestall any attempt by Russia to extent her influence up to the Hindu Kush.'[13] But the facts do not justify any such conclusion. Russia hardly did anything to prevent the Second Afghan War, nor did she take much interest in it beyond secretly helping the tribesmen with arms and money. Her aggressive designs, of which the British had such a fear, in truth started in right earnest *after* the war. She seized Merv and Sarakhs, and made excursions into Afghan territory. After the settlement of the boundary by the Anglo-Russian boundary commission of 1885, Russians began to infiltrate 'into disputed areas with the object of confronting any attempt at a settlement with a fait accompli.'[14] What really procured non-interference on the part of Russia was not any demonstration of British might by the victories of the Afghan War, but the European situation by which for a long time Russian and British interests were tied together. The other salutary result of the Second Afghan War is said to be

12 Lord Lytton's Minute on Frontier Policy, 4 September 1878.
13 Major-General J.G. Elliott, *The Frontier 1839-1947*, Cassel 1968, p. 46.
14 Ibid, p. 46.

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replacement of Sher Ali, who was believed to be favourably inclined to Russia, by Abdur Rehman who was a friend of the British. This too is not quite true. Sher Ali, as we have endeavoured to show, was eager only to maintain the independence of his own country. He was neither pro-British nor pro-Russian. And if he had perforce at any time to choose between the two he would in all probability have preferred the British. Nor was Abdur Rehman particularly pleased by his English benefactors. He resented Lord Landsdowne's criticism of how he managed his 'internal affair'. Lansdowne, while commenting that Abdur Rehman looked with disfavour on British attempts to placate the border tribes to extend the Indian railway up to the frontier and to open up the passes, concluded 'but I doubt whether he would have been our friend, or at all events a trusty friend, if none of these things had been done.'[15] Abdur Rehman was also piqued at the British refusal for exchange of ambassadors. All this led him to instigate the mullahs into a jehad. The change in Amirs brought about by the Afghan War, therefore, was not in favour of Anglo-Afghan relations. It inaugurated no change, and if there was one, it was to worsen the relations not to better them. The war was in fact a mistake committed in a hurry by a cabinet seized with Russian schizophrenia and an imperialist viceroy eager to plant the Union Jack on the banks of the Oxus.

Later Afghan Relations (1881-1947)

Anglo-Afghan relations after the Second Afghan War have been narrated under the chapters dealing with the various governors general.[16] Ripon reversed Lytton's policy and reverted back to what it was under Lawrence, Mayo and Northbrook. In Landsdowne's viceroyship Anglo-Afghan

15 Lord Landsdowne to Lord Kimberley, 23 August 1892, Landsdowne Papers.

16 See Vol. 3 part I of the author's *A History of Indian Civilisation*, Ess Ess Publications under chapters on Ripon, Landsdowne, Elgin and Curzon and Vol. 3 part 2 (the present volume) under Minto.

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relations remained strained due to an expedition sent by him to Chitral and the construction of a railway line to the Bolan pass. However, the Amir was satisfied by the demarcation of the Indo-Afghan boundary by Sir Mortimer Durand in 1893. Under Elgin the capture of Chitral by the British made relations worse, and there was a general Afghan uprising (1897) which was ultimately suppressed by the English forces. Although Curzon was a diehard imperialist, he did not make inroads into Afghanistan, though he maintained a strong border force. He created a new North West Frontier Province. After Abdur Rehman's death in 1901 the British government did not recognise the same arrangements with his son, Habibullah, but ultimately the new Amir had his way when the English, fearing it might drive him to Russia, sent a mission under Dane.

After Curzon, by a Convention signed between them, Britain and Russia in 1907 agreed to respect Afganistan's integrity. Minto invited the Amir to India and conferred the title of 'his majesty' on him. Following Habibullah's murder, in 1919 relations between India and Afghanistan deteriorated. His son, Amanullah, encouraged the Afghans to launch a jehad, in order to divert them from internal matters which he mismanaged. At this moment Punjab was in a ferment due to the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala tragedy, and Amanullah took advantage of this. Russian and Turkish emissaries also arrived in Kabul to create trouble. In January 1921 a British mission was sent to Kabul under Sir Henry Dobbs but nothing emerged out of it. Jinnah's attitude to the Afghan jehad was not very clear. At one time he said 'I am a Muslim first and everything else afterwards.' But he denied having anything to do with the Amir, observing 'This Afghan hare is none of my starting.' Mahatma Gandhi's view was 'I would in a sense, certainly assist the Amir of Afghanistan if he waged war against the British government.' At the same time he also said 'I would rather see India perish at the hands of the Afghans than purchase freedom from Afghan invasion at the cost of her honour.' His general attitude seems to have been support to the Afghans, provided

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they helped in the Indian struggle for freedom: but no subservience to them. Ultimately, however, the British succeeded in stamping out the Afghan rising. By the treaty of Rawalpindi (1921) Afghanistan was given complete freedom in foreign affairs. The boundaries between India and Afghanistan demarcated by the British Commission in 1919 was accepted. with slight modification. The privilege of importing arms ammunitions etc., which was withdrawn in 1919 was restored The British were absolved of the payment of subsidy, and the two countries (Britain and Afghanistan) exchanged ambassadors.

Amanullah tried to westernise Afghanistan by introducing western dress, emancipation of women, and so forth. His intention was doubtless good, but it brought the mullas screaming at him. On 7 January 1929 he abdicated and was succeeded by his elder brother. But only after a few days Habibullah, a brigand from Kohistan who had managed to raise a large local following, seized the throne. There was chaos with Habibullah (Bacha-i-Sakao; son of a water-carrier) being installed as Amir. The RAF had to evacuate many who got stuck up in Afghanistan including the British ambassador. Nadir Khan who had been ambassador in Paris under Amanullah made a bid to end the confusion and, after some reverses, entered Kabul and was proclaimed king. Although he was not recognised by the Indian government, he had the support of the Afridi, Mahsud and Wazir tribesmen whom he rewarded by giving them some allowances which were later opposed by India. Nadir Khan ruled well for four years, at the end of which he was assassinated by persons who with Russian instigation were trying for the restoration of Amanullah. Thereafter Nadir Khan's brothers, who had the loyalty of the Barakzai clan, ruled as agents till Zahir Shah took over in 1946. Afghanistan progressed all round during his rule under the guidance of his able prime minister Mohammed Hashim. Relations with India also improved during his reign.

The entire history of Anglo-Afghan relations depicts mistrust, and the imperialist desire for expansion on the part of the British. This was heightened by the strategic position which Afghanistan happened to occupy. The ruling Amirs of

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Afghanistan had a tough time. On the one hand they had to get the support of their own turbulent tribesmen, on the other they had to keep at bay the British lion and the Russian bear. But they were fortunate in having as their subjects one of the most headstrong and warlike people in the world. That, more than anything else, was the secret of Afghan independence.

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6

Some Aspects of the Indian National Movement

I want to have the key of my house, and not merely one stranger turned out of it.'

Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak

The different phases of the Indian national movement have been briefly narrated under the headings of the concerned governors general. Even risking some repetition it might be profitable to present a consolidated account which emphasises certain essential features of it.

1. *Circumstances Leading to the Formation of the Congress*

Although the first Congress met at Bombay under the leadership of Allan Octavian Hume on 28 December 1886, the germs of the nationalist movement were sown much earlier. There were two distinct strains in Indian nationalism. On the one hand there were those who hated the English as haughty foreign rulers having an alien culture. They considered them as kaffirs or mlechchas. The Muslims particularly had recent memories of their own domination and felt sore about being deprived of it by a British conquest. These persons desired to get rid of the English altogether. The others were those who having had a taste of English culture and education, had no hatred

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for England. They wished to regenerate India, even with British assistance and achieve self-determination through constitutional progress. These western educated Indians were concentrated in the bigger towns of India, like Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. 'At the opening of the twentieth century indeed, of all the cities of the British empire, only London was greater than Calcutta whose population then was more than a million. Here lived men with diverse vocations; European businessmen, government servants, lawyers and men of different professions. Although Bengali urban and rural society had marked differences there was one common class amongst it namely the 'dominant elite.' These claimed distinction as the bhadralok, literally the 'respectable people' or 'gentle men.'[1] They were distinguished by their typical speech, dress, manners, habits and way of thinking. But the main trait which marked them out from others was their looking on manual labour as something degrading. Even if they owned land, they would not work in the fields themselves but get labourers to do it. Throughout the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century, avenues of employment in the lower services of British India opened up more and more. Indian clerks, accountants, qanungos, lawyers, doctors and teachers were needed. These swelled the ranks of Bengal's bhadralok, the largest concentration being at Calcutta. The study of English, which was essential for these services and professions, became increasingly popular, and the opening of the Calcutta University in 1857 provided opportunity for higher English education also. Education, which now cut across the lines of caste, became the sine qua non of a white collar job, and as a Bengal government report of 1928 observed 'the one gate to the society of the bhadralok.'[2]

The bhadralok considered the British to be liberators, forgetting that they merely substituted one rule for another. But in Bombay the Maharashtrian Chitpavan Brahmins had been a ruling group not very long ago, and had no reason to

1 J.H. Broomfield, *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society, Twentieth-Century Bengal*, University of California Press, 1968, p.5 (Hereinafter referred to as 'Broomfield').

2 Broomfield, 8, *op.cit*

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consider the English as liberators. The sober and industrious Parsis on the other hand, who became an essentially urban community, matched the bhadralok in scholarliness. In Madras the beginning was made a little later, and that was after the revolt of 1857. Whatever the group division was, the meeting point for all of them was nationalism. Some of these early nationalists expressed their opposition to British rule, as for example, Gopal Hari Deshmukh, who in 1849 wrote in his Bombay journal that India would have to go the way of America and rebel against the British.[3] Such an utterance would have been regarded as sedition if made a decade later. But until the British confidence in the stability of their rule was rudely shaken by the events of 1857, they viewed such observations with amused nonchalance. Most of the Indian intelligentsia were interested spectators of the mutiny rather than participants. But they now started thinking British rule could prove as fragile as the Mughal did. The awe inspired by the majesty of English governors general paled, and educated Indians began to feel that freedom could one day become a reality.

With the last three decades of the nineteenth century, Indian nationalism entered what one might call its second phase. Criticism now replaced acceptance, and agitation inactivity. Although the mutiny petered out, discontent remained. Some of it was God-sent as famines, epidemics and devastation. Agrarian unrest, the rift between landholder and peasant, rural indebtedness, exclusion of Indians from higher jobs, wasteful expenditure, costly wars and racial discrimination were, on the contrary man made, and to be more precise British made. Indians took to English education with an avidity which would have astounded even Macaulay, and they were disappointed to find that despite this they were studiously kept out of the prestigious administrative services. And with English education they also imbibed western ideas of liberty

3 Dietmar Rothermund, *The Phases of Indian Nationalism*, Nachiketa Publications, Bombay, 1970, p. 15 (Hereafter referred to as 'Rothermund').

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preached by thinkers like John Stuart Mill, which set a keenness to their own appetite for freedom. Balked of entry into the services, these educated Indians became skilful journalists and entered municipal councils. They espoused their cause in London and became leaders of small political organisations.

The Indian National Congress was not, to begin with, the name of any party. It was just an annual gathering of leading Indian nationalists during Christmas time in some important Indian town.[4] The main object of these meetings was to discuss important current affairs and give expression to the public opinion. A.O. Hume, a retired Indian civil servant, was largely instrumental in organising the Congress in its early years. He had a love for India which was most unusual for an Englishman of those times and as a civil servant knew the country well. He remained the honorary general secretary of the Congress from 1885 to 1906 and, so long as he was in India, practically its guiding spirit. He supervised all arrangements relating to the Congress sessions, kept in touch with Congress committees and leaders, prepared reports and minutes, and looked after its finances.[5] It was his ungrudging devotion that put the Congress on a firm footing, till Gopal Krishna Gokhale took over the mantle of leadership. Even after he left for England in 1894, he continued to remain the general secretary of the Congress till 1906. It was Hume who protected the Congress from internal erosion in its early years. As Bhupendra Basu told the Bankipore Congress in 1912, Hume had the courage to 'conceive and carry out what great emperors and empires in the past had failed to do. He conceived the great idea of binding together the different people and nationalities and communities and creeds of India into one common nation...Who do you think had the power in the early days of the eighties, to bring together men unknown to each other, from Bombay, from

4 B.R. Nanda (ed.) *Essays in Modern History*, Oxford, 1980, p. 45 (Referred to hereafter, as 'Nanda.' Facts about the organisation of the early Congress have been taken from S.R. Mehrotra, *The Early Indian National Congress*, in this book).

5 Nanda, 46-7.

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Madras, from the Punjab, from Bengal, from the United Provinces?'[6]

In the town where the Congress met, there used to be a reception committee consisting of the leading citizens of the provinces. This was elected at a public meeting called by the local standing Congress Committee. This procedure was changed in 1908 after which the reception committee was to be organised by the provincial Congress committee of the province in which the Congress met. This provincial committee included only those persons who gave their written agreement to the r ules and objectives of the Congress and paid a minimum subscription of Rs 25. The Congress reception committee had a number of significant tasks. It raised funds, elected the president, and formed executive committees and sub-committees. The Congress sessions were costly affairs involving an expenditure from a lakh to three lakh of rupees. As the early Congressmen believed more in getting British sympathies in England than in combating the English in India, they spent another half a lakh or so on this. The funds were contributed by businessmen, landlords and the princes, apart from subscriptions from the general public.[7]

Apart from the bhadralok of Bengal and the Parsis of Bombay, national minded people joined from Madras and the Punjab. The Chettiar traders of Madras and later Tamil Brahmins, contributed to early nationalism. In the Punjab the teachings of Dayanand Saraswati made a profound impact, and Hindus eagerly imbibed the philosophy of the Arya Samaj.

Congress sessions were open to anyone who wished to attend. The delegate fee of Rs 10 or 20, the cost of long journeys and the fact that the proceedings were in English, however, considerably restricted the audience to English knowing upper class men with 'morning coats and well-pressed trousers' as Jawaharlal Nehru remarked.[8] This exclusiveness kept people apart, quite a few of the delegates preferring to stay in hotels and bungalows.

6 Report of the Proceedings of the 27th Congress held at Bankipore in December 1912, p. 50.

7 Nanda, 45, *op. cit.*

8 Nanda, 47, *op. cit.*

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It was Gandhi who made all of them stay together in a single camp in huts, imparting a spirit of comradeship. It was all very well to have these grand annual camps, but once the delegates dispersed, apart from writing in journals and papers, there was no communication and follow-up. Besides this, the early Congress leaders like W.C. Bannerjee, L.M. Ghose, Gokhale, Malaviya and so forth, believed more in evoking British sympathy in Britain than agitating in India. They were mostly men of the upper middle classes, highly westernised and with firm confidence in British liberalism. They looked to their English rulers to gradually liberate them through constitutional reforms. In its earlier years Congress had little mass contact, although if they had the means and the will to approach the masses they could, as Gandhi later did, obtain their support.

2. *The Effect of British Economic Exploitation.*

An English writer has defined Britain's civilising mission in India as 'opening the Indian's minds to new ideas' and raising 'the poor, ignorant millions' from the dust.[9] The entire history of this task in so far as the economic aspect is concerned was tall promises and poor performance. The British emphasised that India was overpopulated, that India was not an industrial country at all, that the cultivators were ill-used by zamindars and village money-lenders, and that unless British capital flowed into the country and augmented investments of shy Indian capitalists, there could be no real economic progress in India. The nationalists soon came to realise that these were only excuses to justify British economic exploitation. There was a great gulf between what the British claimed to do and what they did. The British rule seemed to national minded Indians to be more an obstacle than a help in India's economic development because it was directed to make India serve England's dominant economic interest. In other words it was plain exploitation. So by the end of the nineteenth century they

9 C.H. Phillips, *The Evolution of India and Pakistan*, Oxford, 1962, foreword.

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became convinced that if India was to develop economically it would be under an Indian government alone.

The British substituted feudalism by a worse evil, viz. a colonial economy. Everything in India was made to cater to England's needs. Raw cotton was fed into the mills of Lancashire, leaving Indian handlooms idle. The finished cloth was sent back to India to sell at high rates and draw out Indian capital. Thus England reaped a double benefit by feeding its mills with cheap material and getting a high price for its cloth. That was why when the nationalist movement gained ground, Gandhi devised as its emblem the spinning wheel and the boycott of British goods.

The British gave out that they had heavily invested money in India. Richard Temple wrote in 1880 that among the reasons why England must keep India was that 'a vast amount of British capital had been sunk in the country, on the assurance of British rule being, humanly speaking, perpetual.'[10] This was a fictitious claim. According to Sir George Paish British capital invested in India and Ceylon in 1909 was just £ 365 million, of which only two and a half million were invested in commercial and industrial undertakings.[11] The nationalists realised that it was the investment of Indian capital alone which could make the country prosper. It was not that Indian capital was not available or forthcoming. But it was swamped by British capital and that too in schemes like the railways which were more for Britain's benefit than India's. Indians grew apprehensive of foreign capital investments because it created vested interests. Temple's claim was of course wrong. But if right, it would have been a greater impediment to Indian independence. The British would obviously be reluctant to relinquish their hold on a land in which they had large capital investments.

The British view was that India did not need any modernising. In fact the pace of modernisation, it was believed, should be, slowed down. This was a view to which the nationalists

10 B.R. Nanda & V.C. Joshi, (ed.) *Studies in Modern Indian History*, 1, Orient Longmans, 1972, p. 91, *op. cit.* (Temple, 497). Referred to hereafter as 'Joshi'.

11 *Ibid.* 91 fn. 48.

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could not subscribe. Indian reformers felt that India should proceed fast on the road to progress. Firstly they wanted an integrated approach to economic development in all branches, not merely in a few, like transport, trade or agriculture. Secondly they thought rapid and modern industrialisation was necessary for India. It was that alone which could unite the diverse Indian people into one entity of common interests. There were other agricultural countries in the world also, but they were rapidly progressing industrially too. So why not India ? If you talked to the British about India's industrial progress they said 'Oh, India is an agricultural country.' If about agricultural progress, they would say 'Oh, India is a feudal country.' And if one were to desire social progress they would put up the plea of not wanting to interfere with Indian customs, manners and religion. But the nationalists had no such inhibitions. They wanted all round progress. They went to the springs of their religion and culture to get strength. But the very fact that most of the top national leaders got their education, and some their careers too, abroad, shows they were equally keen for modernisation.

The British tried to slake the thirst of Indians for progress in ingenious ways which appeared to benefit them, but were really to benefit themselves. Look, they said, we have given you the railways. But Indians were quick to see through the subterfuge. Railways opened up the interior more and more to British goods and thus increased Indian backwardness. Transport comes after production. When India had no goods to send out, no grain to export, what was the use of wasting the Indian taxpayer's money on railways ? Nationalists felt that the money would be better spent on industrialisation and agricultural development. It was as Tilak remarked like 'decorating another's wife'.[12] Ostensibly for India's advantage, the railway was really to 'open the Indian market to British manufacturers, enable the export of raw material and foodstuffs, promote the sale of British steel and machine products,

12 Joshi, 105 *op. cit.*

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provide a channel for investment of surplus British capital, and facilitate the movement of the armed forces'.[13]

Since the British always stressed that India was an agricultural country, rural reform was very much on the anvil. But here again, although they appeared to have the cultivators's good in mind their reforms usually benefited the landlords. The stance was on land improvement because the more productive land became the greater would be the security to the British of payment of revenue. Whatever may have been the motive, land improvement never became a reality. There was constant pressure on land because of lack of industries which could provide alternative employment. Revenue demand was high, and the method of its realisation rigid. A confused welter of hasty and ill-conceived tenancy acts multiplied litigation, which was not only costly but long and tedious as well. Although co-operative credit and loans were given to farmers, the village money-lender retained his vicious hold because such aid was not for customary rites to be observed in marriages, birth and funeral ceremonies, which to a Hindu were as essential as improving his land. Farmers were obliged to sell off their land, which was often knocked down in auctions in favour of the bids of those who had never seen a plough. All this culminated in wide agrarian unrest, and in the later part of the nationalist movement the peasants too joined it on a large scale.

Neither British education nor British rule can, however, be said to be the cause of Indian patriotism. Love of one's home is really inborn in mankind. There were patriots like Shivaji before the British established their rule. It was not British rule which created Indian patriotism, but repression. Any repression whether of the Aryan brand, the Mughal brand or British, is bound to generate the desire for removing it. In other words the desire for freedom. Freedom, of course, means getting rid or restraints such as imposed by any foreign rule (not necessarily British alone); and as Rousseau says 'There can be no patriotism without liberty.' English education did bring about acquaintance with thinkers like Mill, and created ambitions in Indian minds like desire

13 *Ibid.* 106.

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for manning the higher administrative posts. At first Indians were fascinated by western habits, manners, dress and liberty. But when the initial glamour wore out, they realised the infinite superiority of their own culture. English philosophy seemed hollow before the lofty ideas or the Upanishads which, as Deussen found out, formulated 'philosophical conceptions unequalled in India or perhaps anywhere else in the world'; and of which Schopenhauer said 'They are destined sooner or later to be the faith of the people.' Their own rich Sanskrit literature with gems like Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti appeared unsurpassable by English, and the noble thought of the *Gitá* far outstripped any which western thinkers could offer. Having wandered in alien fields, the Indian nationalist returned with greater vigour and confidence to his own. English education was only the catalyst which brought about the change to patriotism. It served to awaken the lion in the wolf which did not know its own strength. After having been charmed for a while by the magic wand of westernism, the Indian nationalist recalled again Lord Krishna's immortal words : *svadharme nidhanam shreyah*; 'it is better to die in one's own duty.'[14]

3. *The Moderates and the Extremists*

In the beginning the Congress was a composite body with the single minded purpose of discussing questions of the day and giving authoritative expression to the public opinion of the country. But soon groups and factions developed within it. In the last decades of the nineteenth century the political climate underwent a change, The younger generation of Congressmen began to be critical of some of its policies. In a series of articles which appeared in 1893-4 in the *Indu Prakash* of Bombay under the caption 'New Lamps for Old,' Aurobindo Ghose launched a bitter attack on the Congress.[15] He accused the organisation of being timid and out of touch with the masses, of having no vision and earnestness, and of being

14 *Bhagavad Gita*, III, 35 (Trans. Kees W. Bolle, California, 1979).
15 Nanda, 55 *op. cit.*

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slavishly imitative of English institutions. 'In brief', he concluded, 'we are at present the blind led, if not by the blind, at any rate by the one-eyed.'[16] He wanted the Congress to assert itself, not depend slavishly on the 'British sense of justice.' Aurobindo's stand soon became that of the younger and more volatile section of the Congress which came to the known as the 'extremists', as distinguished from the 'moderates.' The extremists found a leader in Bal Gangadhar Tilak, while Gopal Krishna Gokhale had been leading the moderates. Tilak's gurus were Vivekanand and Dayanand, Gokhale's were M.G. Ranade and Dadabhai Naoroji. Apart from these leaders the main spokesmen of the moderates were Pherozeshah Mehta and Surendranath Banerjea, and of the extremists Lala Lajpat Rai and Bepin Chandra Pal.

The emergenceof the extremists was accelerated by the failure of the Congress in getting any substantial concessions from the British, as well as by the imperialist policies of some governors general like Lytton and Curzon. The utterances of the English rulers made the extremists sure that they would never grant the Indians freedom. Even the British King spoke like that. After some terrorists outrages in India the British King wrote to Minto the viceroy : 'The seditious movements in India have caused me serious anxiety, and most earnestly do I trust that you and your government will display the greatest firmness. If we are to retain our hold on the country, we must endeavour to crush the present disloyalty with a high hand, or else we may have similar trouble as we had fifty years ago.'[17] When Minto suggested taking an Indian member in his council, the King wrote that it would be dangerous for the Indian empire 'if a native were to take part in the council of the viceroy.[18] When finally it was decided to have one, the viceroy pleaded that it should be a fair complexioned Indian not a dark one! While acknowledging that Sir S.P. Sinha was able and experienced, the real reason why he preferred him to the other candidate, Justice Ashutosh Mukerjee, was expressed by him thus : 'Please

16 *Ibid.*

17 B. Shiva Rao, *India's Freedom Movement*, Orient Longman, 1972, p. 4 fn.

18 *Ibid.*

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do not think me terribly narrow; but Sinha is comparatively white, whilst Mukerjee is as black as my silk hat. And opposition in the official world would not be regardless of mere shades of colour.'[19] All this convinced the extremists that the English would never willingly grant India self-rule. They also felt that under the circumstances it was humiliating for Indians to grovel before them. 'It is no use simply crying for rights or begging for them;' Tilak wrote in an article in July 1906, 'we must insist upon our rights and do all we can.' The moderates thought British rule to be beneficial and the ultimate gateway to autonomy. The extremists were against all foreign rule. The moderates had faith in the British sense of fairness and justice, the extremists distrusted them. The moderates believed in the English pattern of political evolution, the extremists in the revolutionary traditions of France, America, Italy and Ireland. The moderates were generally 'from the upper middle classes, elderly, well-to-do, liberally educated, anglicised, secular in outlook, politically conservative, influenced by British constitutionalism, apathetic and cautious.' The extremists came from the 'lower middle class men, younger in age, not very well-to-do, not so liberally educated, less anglicised less secular in outlook, radicals in politics, influenced by European revolutionary ideas, energetic and bold.'[20]

The main difference between the two groups was in the methods which they followed to achieve the objective. The moderates wanted self-government within the British empire, the extremists, '*swaraj*'. But even they did not mean, to begin with, *purna swaraj*.[21] They did not contemplate a complete breakaway from the empire, or at least they believed that the question whether India would stay in the British Commonwealth or not, came later. What was needful at the moment was to shake off the British rule. This was an essential pre-condition to any decision which might be taken about staying in or staying

19 B. Shiva Rao, *India's Freedom Movement*, Orient Longman, 1972, p.5 fn.

20 Nanda, 57.

21 *Swaraj* means home-rule or self-government, *purna-swaraj*, complete independence (*purna*—'whole' or 'complete).

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out later. Tilak explained his point of view to H.W. Nevinson, a journalist, in 1907. 'Unorganised, disarmed, and still disunited, we should not have a chance of shaking off the British suzerainty. We may leave all that sort of thing to a distant time.... The immediate question for us is how we are to bring pressure on this bureaucracy.... It is only in our answer to that question that we differ from the so-called moderates'.[22] Tilak, the leader of the extremists, found his inspiration in Indian religion and the Indian way of life, of which Vivekanand and Dayanand were exponents. Although he was not necessarily for a break with the Commonwealth, others in the extremist group, like Lajpat Rai, Bepin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghose considered *swaraj* as independence outside the empire. The difference between the moderates and the extremists were only of degree. As Tilak said 'The extremists of today will be moderates tomorrow, just as the moderates of today were extremists yesterday'. So too could be said to be the dividing line between the extremists who wanted self-rule within or without the empire and those whom we might call the super-extremists whose aim was complete severance from the Commonwealth.

Tilak's slogan was 'Self-reliance, not mendicancy.' Gokhale's belief on the contrary was that the destinies of India and England were linked. He favoured the use of *swadeshi* but considered boycott to be an extreme weapon, to be used only when there was no other way out. Boycott meant a deliberate attempt to injure another, even though he may not be an Indian. Besides, boycott of English goods still left the way open for the use of other foreign goods, and so would not help the *swadeshi* movement. Tilak favoured not only boycott but also non-cooperation, which Gandhi was to later develop as one of the instruments of his campaign for independence. The actual method advocated by Tilak was outlined by him in a speech in Calcutta on 2 January 1907. '...if you have not the power of active resistance, have you not the power of self-denial and self-absistence in such a way as not to assist this

22 Joshi, 145-6 *op. cit.* Henry Nevinson, *The New Spirit in India*, London, 1908.

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foreign government to rule over you? This is boycott and this is what we mean when we say, boycott is a political weapon. We shall not assist them in fighting beyond the frontiers or outside India with Indian blood and money. We shall not assist them in carrying on the administration of justice. We shall have our own courts, and when the time comes we shall not pay taxes. Can you do that by your united effort ? If you can, you are free from tomorrow.'[23]

4. *Gokhale and the Moderates*

Although in the end Tilak's virile opposition to British rule proved more spectacular and impressed the Indian mind more, it would be wrong to suppose that Gokhale's attitude was ever servile, despite many diatribes unjustly levelled at him. Tilak himself once said 'I think in me (government) will not find a *kutcha* (raw) reed as they did in Professor Gokhale.'[24] He was polite and humble, even at times subservient, but never servile. Besides, Tilak came into the political limelight later, when the Indians had been thoroughly incensed by British highhandedness in the time of Curzon. Gokhale and the moderates raised their voice, when to oppose the British rule was unthinkable. Tilak believed in forcing the foreign rulers to act differently. Gokhale, knowing that thought is the forerunner of action, concentrated on changing their minds. His early life may be briefly narrated. Born on 9 May 1866 in a village of Ratnagiri district on the western coast of the Bombay Presidency he was a Chitpavan Brahmin. He had to lead a hard life, for his father died early and he had to support the family on an income of barely eight rupees a month. He ate one meal a day, cooking it himself, and read his textbooks by the street lamp because he could not pay for oil. Tilak and Agarkar had founded an organisation controlling a number of schools, known as the Deccan Education Society. Gokhale joined it, for it offered an income of seventy-five rupees a

23 B.G. Tilak, *His Writings and Speeches,* Madras. 1919, p. 65.
24 B.R. Nanda, Gokhale, Oxford, 1977, p. 113 *op. cit.* (P. Dutt, *Memoirs of Motilal Ghose,* Calcutta, 1935, p. 98). Referred to hereafter as 'BRG'.

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month. In 1885 became professor of English in the Fergusson College which was run by the Society. Here he made the acquaintance of Justice Ranade who was to become his future guru. Ranade made him one of the secretaries of the Sarvajanik Sabha of Poona, then the chief political association in India. Soon the bickerings of Tilak and Agarkar broke up the Deccan Education Society, and Gokhale was persuaded to start teaching mathematics and political economy as well, in addition to acting as bursar— all with no extra payment. He did so willingly and, despite the tiring work, found time to contribute articles in the *Sudharak*, a weekly.

Gokhale entered politics in 1889 when on 27 December he made a speech in the Congress to support an amendment of Tilak to a resolution on the reform of the governor general's legislative council. Next day he criticised the government of India's action on the report of the public service commission in a brilliant speech. A year later when the Congress met at Calcutta he made an eloquent plea for reduction of the salt tax. At the Lahore session in December 1893 he criticised the rules for the legislative councils framed under the Act of 1892 and the inequitable distribution of financial burdens between India and England. From 1889 onwards Gokhale attended the Congress sessions regularly. At the Nagpur Congress, 1891, he was elected a member of the subjects committee. This gave him the opportunity of meeting many senior leaders. When the Congress met at Poona, Gokhale was one of the secretaries of the reception committee.

At this time Gokhale got involved in the Age of Consent Bill controversy. B.M.Malabari, a Parsi journalist, in his *Notes on Infant Marriage and Enforced Widowhood* launched a crusade against child marriage and the social stigma attached to widow marriages. As a consequence the government introduced a Bill raising the age of consummation of marriage from ten to twelve years. The Bengal press and the orthodox group led by Tilak, vehemently opposed the Bill, and Gokhale who, along with Ranade, supported it, found himself suddenly unpopular. The communal riots which broke out in Bombay in August 1893 again led to a tussle between the moderates and Tilak. Ranade and others tried to play down the riots in order to

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avoid provocation to the government. Taunting Ranade for this attitude, Tilak said 'As Rao Bahadur (Ranade) has been bound by silver chains (as a government servant), we cannot say that his opinions on political matters must be always to our good.'[25] The simmering hostility between the two groups came to a head on the question of holding the Congress session in Poona in December 1895. The controversy was about the use of the Congress pavilion for the social conference which used to be an allied affair. Tilak and his party opposed this now on the ground that the two matters were different. Besides Ranade and his party were ousted by Tilak's followers from the Sarvajanik Sabha. Ranade formed a parallel organisation, the Deccan Sabha, but it did not prove effective. Tilak called it 'a *Pinjrapole* (stable) of Rao Bahadurs.'[26]

A turn in Gokhale's fortunes came with Ranade's sponsoring a visit by Gokhale to England. Gokhale boldly faced the Welby Commission and pointed out forcefully to them by irrefutable arguments, the misguided policies which the British were following in India. Caine, one of the member on the Commission, described Gokhale's evidence 'as the most masterly exposition of the views of an educated Indian reformer on all the subjects dealt with.'[27] Gokhale addressed many clubs and associations in Britain and created an excellent impression by his eloquent speeches. He also met Morley, the future secretray of states for India, and the visit left him 'overjoyed like a grown-up school boy'.[28] Unfortunately for Gokhale, just as things were rosy with him, he made a calamitous statement just before he left England, highlighting the excesses committed by British soldiers in the course of taking anti-plague measures in Poona. The statement was based on evidence from India which Gokhale thought reliable. There had been some such incidents no doubt. Women had been stripped for inspection, the sanctity of idols violated, young girls carried off and other

25 *BRG*, 81.
26 *BRG* 87.
27 *BRG* 97.
28 *Ibid*, 100, *op. cit.*

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indignities perpetrated. Gokhale's public indictment raised a storm in England and took away all the good impression he had created. What was worse, when he reached India and was asked to substantiate what he had said, he couldn't do so. This was not the first instance in which Indians had been subjected to indignities. They had been facing them all through the British rule, and in fact much earlier, right from the time of Mahmud of Ghazni. So it was nothing new. Once the solidiers had gone and those missing and harmed, lamented, the whole thing was forgotten as a sad affair but not unusual. Those who had suffered did not wish to add to the possibility of more suffering by raising their voice. Gokhale got no evidence. Oppressed by his conscience and plagued by his sincerity, both of which were strong in him, he hurriedly sent off an apology and a retraction 'to H.E. the governor, to the members of the plague committee and to the soldiers engaged in plague operations.' But the world is a harsh judge of people, particularly of their weaknesses. No one appreciated Gokhale's honesty. Everyone in England discounted all that he had urged about India's oppression. He had been talking nonsense they thought, just as about the plague business. The Indian press did not take kindly to Gokhale's resilement, particularly as Tilak, who had meantime been imprisoned for his outspokenness, had gone up in public estimation. Whatever its moral value, Gokhale's apology was a mistake. It was all a hotchpotch of hurry, overcredence and indiscretion. He should not have trusted second-hand reports. Even if he did, he need not have said anything about them while in England. The proper thing was to find out on return and then give a statement. And once having given it, the heavens would not have fallen if he had just kept quiet.

Anyway Gokhale had learnt his lesson. Never again did he speak without hard facts, and whatever he said was tempered with mildness. Soon his star was to rise again. In 1899 he was elected to the Bombay legislative council and came into prominent notice by his speeches against the Land Alienation Bill. In 1902 he succeeded Pherozeshah Mehta on the imperial legislative council. In 1905 he founded the Servants of India Society which banded together a group of dedicated men who

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were determined to serve the nation by pledging themselves to a life of toil and austerity, Gokhale's influence over Morley was initially great. Gradually, however, it wore off, particularly when it began to seem certain that Tilak and the extremists were going to oust the moderates. When Gokhale went to England again, he happened to criticise Morley's budget speech in a talk with an official of the India office. When this was conveyed to the secretary of state he observed 'I can forgive him (Gokhale) for being double-faced but I can't forgive him for being so stupid.'[29]

The grossly delayed Minto-Morley reforms put the moderates in a predicament. The main charge against them was that despite much effort at home and abroad they had not been able to produce anything. By delaying the reforms, and then by watering them down so as to make them unwelcome, Morley and more than him, Minto, hastened to exit of the moderates from the Congress. Tilak voiced this impatience when he said.

'He (Dadabhai Naoroji) has come at the age of eighty-two to tell us that he is bitterly disappointed.[30] Mr Gokhale, I know, is not disappointed,...but is ready to wait another 50 years till he is disappointed like Mr Dadabhai'[31]

Then there were the almost stupid acts of some of the British bureaucrats, as for example Fuller, which made Indian opinion veer towards the extremists, and of course the Bengal partition, the elixir which rejuvenated Indian nationalism. Tilak found the partition 'not so much a British blunder as an Indian opportunity.'[32] When he drove through the streets of Calcutta after it, he was almost worshipped like a god. To crown everything the British raised a storm by arresting Lajpat Rai, the most prominent Congress leader of the Punjab, and deporting him to Burma.

Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh had opposed some of the unjust measures introduced in the Punjab at the initiative of its

29 *BRG*, 238, *op. cit.* (Diary of F.A. Hirtzel , 23 July 1906.

30 Dadabhai had been put up as Congress president in the 1906 Congress Session to avoid an open conflict between moderates and extremists.

31 *BRG*, 261 *op. cit.* (Tilak Writings and Speeches, p. 40).

32 *BRG*, 245.

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lieutenant governor, Sir Denzil Ibbetson. The Land Colonisation Bill and the increase in water rates were particularly obnoxious. Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh were deported for agitating against these, although they did it in a peaceful manner. Gokhale, who was an admirer of Lajpat, campaigned for their release, even though this brought him into disfavour with Minto, the viceroy, who wrote to Morley 'I am thoroughly disappointed in Gokhale. I liked what I had seen of him and believed he was honest at heart. But the part he has played of late has disgusted me...'[33] Despite Gokhale's advocacy, other repressive measures, like the Seditious Meetings Bill, were passed, which disillusioned the moderate leader. 'There are (among European officials)' he said, those 'who think that unless an Indian speaks to them with bated breath and whispering humbleness he is seditious.'[34] Motilal Nehru, then a moderate leader, blamed the extremists for the repression let loose : 'The forces which were slowly and silently working for the good of the country have received a sudden check. For all this we have to thank the extremists fools.' D.E. Wacha, writing in the same strain said 'The sins of a few are visited on the whole country.'[35]

The differences between the two groups led to a clash in the Surat Congress of November 1907. It was so bad that the police had to intervene and clear the meeting hall. Both the extremists and the moderates tried to justify their repective stands. Gokhale was greatly upset by the incident. 'I felt' he wrote, 'like one who has been blown up into high air with the fort he was guarding and who descends on earth to find himself surrounded by ruins.'[36] To add to his agony, Gokhale's elder brother Govind died soon after the Surat showdown, and he was plunged in domestic troubles. Even then he continued his public and political work earnestly, satisfaction in having done his duty his only reward. 'I do my work' he said,

33 Minto to the Morley 7 August 1907, Morley Papers.
34 *BRG*, 276 *op. cit.* (Karve and Ambedkar, Vol. 2 p. 23).
35 *BRG*, 278 *op. cit.*
36 *BRG*, 293 *op. cit.* (Gokhale to Roy, 23 January 1908).

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'because I love my country and I feel amply rewarded by the opportunities I have of doing it.'

Gokhale kept on urging Minto to hasten the reforms. Let not the words 'too late' be written on every one of them, he told the viceroy.[37] He even went to England to prevail upon the secretary of state to speed them up. Meanwhile there were further outrages in India inspired by terrorists. The wife and daughter of a European barrister were killed by a bomb really intended for the district magistrate of Muzaffarpur. There was further repression. An Explosive Bill was hurriedly put up and a measure enacted to give wide executive powers to curb seditious writtings. Tilak was once again arrested and given a six year term for his writtings in the *Kesari* on the Muzaffarpur incident. This made him an even greater hero. Public opinion ran high against Gokhale, and some of the extremists even suggested that Gokhale wanted to get rid of Tilak. The *Hindu Panch* accused him of 'playing the role of Iago' by conspiring with the governor of Bombay. Gokhale's supporters got legal action taken against the paper, but there was one thing which Gokhale could never bear—that someone be harmed because of him. When the erring editor's press was confiscated, and he was broke, he helped him magnanimously with a subsistence allowance for several years.

When the Minto-Morley reforms came they were disappointing. Morley had left the details to be filled up by the English bureaucracy, who shaped them so as to render them ineffective. Gokhale was not against Muslim representation, but separate electorates for them gave the Muslims far more representation than was warranted. To Wedderburn he wrote 'The Mohammedan representation in the viceroy's council is so excessive as to be not only unjust but monstrously unjust.'[38] Besides there was invidious discrimination in franchise. A Muslim teacher in Calcutta getting a salary of fifty rupees could vote, but a Hindu professor getting five hundred could not. In Bombay every Mohammedan who earned £ 135 a year had a vote for electing a member to the council while even the

37 *BRG*, 297.
38 *BRG*, 349 *op. cit.* (Gokhale to Wedderburn December 1909).

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richest Hindu or Parsi could not vote 'unless he was a member of the three of four bodies which have been called upon to return a member.'[39] Flooded with nominated members the imperial council was more or less a body which dittoed every government measure.[40] Despite these limitations Gokhale opposed many unsalutary measures introduced into the council, and tried to introduce, though unsuccessfully, useful ones like the elementary education bill. In 1896 Gandhi, then a young barrister practising in Durban, called on him. The two conceived a fascination for each other. 'Gandhi' Gokhale said, 'was made of the stuff of which heroes were made.'[41] Extolling Gokhale's qualities, Gandhi observed: 'To see Gokhale at work was as much a joy as an education. He never wasted a minute. His private relations and friendships were all for public good. All his talks had reference only to the good of the country, and were absolutely free from any trace of untruth or insincerity. India's poverty and subjection were matters of constant and intense concern to him'.[42]

In October 1912 Gokhale paid a visit to South Africa He had a foretaste of the discrimination practised against the Indians (who formed the majority there). The company of the ship by which he had booked his passage from England asked him to pay for the entire cabin as no white man was likely to travel with him in the same cabin. Gokhale was furious; not because of the extra money he was asked to pay, but because of the indignity offered. Whitehall intervened and the company waived the condition. Gokhale's visit was a triumph, largely because of his English contacts. He expected things would improve, but they didn't. They went worse. The right of south African born Indians to enter Cape Colony was withdrawn. The three pound poll tax was continued, and to insult Indians even more, only those marriages were recognised which were

39 *Ibid*, p. 350.

40 The evaluation of the reforms has been given in a previous chapter. See Lord Minto.

41 *BRG*, 409 *op. cit.*

42 *Ibid.*

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registered by the registrar of marriages or performed by Christian rites. The wives of Indian residents were thus reduced to the 'status of concubines.'[43] Gandhi organised passive resistance. Both he and his wife were arrested, and Indians were forced to work in mines which were declared prisons. Gandhi himself was made to dig stones and sweep the compound in Volksrust jail.

Gokhale who had hurried to India from England where he had been, did everything he could to help. He collected large funds, and held meetings and demonstrations to support the Indians in South Africa. The response was tremendous. Muslims, Parsis, Hindus, all joined. For the first time women marched in processions to voice their indignation. So electrically charged was the atmosphere that Hardinge said in a public meeting 'the movement of passive resistance in South Africa had been dealt with by measures which would not for a moment be tolerated in any country that claims to call itself civilised.'[44] The movement, he said 'had the sympathy of India—deep and burning—and not only of India, but of all those who, like myself, without being Indians themselves, have feelings of sympathy for the people of this country.[45] The African problem was for the time being solved by C.F. Andrews a young English missionary and teacher of St Stephen's College Delhi. At Gokhale's behest he went to South Africa along with his friend W.W. Pearson. When he met Gandhi he did not greet him by a handshake but reverentially by touching his feet, scandalising all the Europeans there. But Gandhi and Andrews developed a lasting friendship, and by Charlie's efforts (as he familiarly called him) he was able to cable Gokhale on 25 January 1914 that a provisional agreement having been reached with Smuts, he was calling off the passive resistance campaign.

Gokhale was busy as usual. Now he was fighting for the holding of the ICS competition in India as well as is England and for more representation of Indians in the higher services. He was invited to serve as a member of the Royal Commission on the public services in 1912. The viceroy was not happy at his

43 *Ibid*, p. 426.
44 *BRG*, 430.
45 *Ibid.*

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being placed on the commission, as naturally the English bureaucracy did not wish for any hindrance in imperialistic schemes. So he hit upon an expedient for striking in a subtle way at Gokhale's popularity viz. by getting a knighthood bestowed upon him. A KCIE would create a halo of exclusiveness around him which would wean him away from the common people who were his strength. But had the viceroy known anything about Gokhale, he wouldn't even have tried. Vanity and Gokhale were like day and night. They couldn't exist together. The title was politely declined.

Meanwhile the Great War of 1914 broke out in Europe. The Royal Commission was not being of much utility so far as Gokhale's ideals were concerned. But he found solace in his work in the Servants of India Society. On 17 February 1915 Gokhale prepared a rough draft of a scheme which he wanted to discuss with Pherozeshah and the Aga Khan. It envisaged provincial autonomy, with three Indians and three Europeans on the governor's councils, eighty per cent of the legislature elected, more powers to legislative councils and to the provincial governments, and a strong centre free from the secretary of state's control particularly in financial matters. The scheme could never be discussed. As Gokhale confessed to N. Subba Rao secretary of the Indian National Congress he had been taking out of his system more than it could stand.[46] Two days after, the end came. 'I have been seeing the fun on this side so long', he said with a smile 'now let me go and see it on the other.' That was Gokhale 'the greatest leader that India has ever produced' as the *Statesman* wrote, 'perhaps her greatest man.'[47] Death was an adventure to him as much as life, for he had known Lord Krishna's immortal words in the *Gita*.

'As a man discards worn-out clothes
and puts on others that are new;
so does the soul leave off old bodies
for new ones.'[48]

46 *BRG*, 459.
47 *Statesman*, 21 February 1915.
48 *Bhagavad Gita*, II : 22.

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Never was there simplicity, sincerity, industry and benevolence in such great measure in a man as in Gokhale. Despite his domestic misfortunes, he never for a moment relaxed the intensity of his devotion to work. Clear thinking and forceful expression made him a faultless orator. 'I listened to every speech made by Gokhale'[49] wrote Gandhi 'but I do not remember a single occasion when I could have wished that he had not expressed a certain idea or had omitted a certain adjective.'[50] Despite the jeers and the jibes of the extremists, Gokhale's patriotism can never for a moment be doubted. His methods for achieving self-government could be controversial, but not his earnestness for the goal. It would indeed be difficult to say if he was more a philosopher or a statesman. He never indulged in cheap showmanship or self-advertisement, the stumbling block for most politicians, and when during a visit he was requested to lay the foundation store of a building in Madras, he excused himself with the remark that 'he deserved no such honour.'[51] The spirit of self-abnegation was strong in him, and never did he desire anything for himself. His entire life was one of dedication and sacrifice. Gandhi, Gokhale's distinguished disciple, mourned his guru's death by walking barefoot for a year.[52] A British historian and MP saw in Gokhale 'not only a great Indian, but a citizen of the world.'[53]

It would be a mistake to think that the moderates were like children crying in the wilderness or that they took a timid and conciliatory attitude. They built the foundation of the national edifice which had been dug for them ironically enough by a handful of Englishmen themselves, like Hume and Wedderburn. The fight the moderates put up, might seem to us, removed by the long distance of time, as ineffective as that of Sancho Panza's with the windmills. But in the fullness of the British Raj it was quite an achievement. The demand for holding the ICS examination on India and getting Indians into the higher

49 During Gokhale's visit to South Africa.
50 *BRG*, 420, *op. cit.* (Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa* p. 403.)
51 *Ibid*, p. 473.
52 *BRG*, 471.
53 *Ibid*, p. 476 *op. cit.* (G.P. Gooch, p. 128).

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services, the separation of the executive and the judiciary, the demand for larger and more powerful legislative councils, for reduction in salt duty, a higher minimum for income tax, repeal of the Army Act, and even prohibition and the ban on prostitution and police reform ; were bold steps considering the times. Englishmen considered themselves to be complete masters in a slave country, and thought they could do in it what they liked. To thwart them in anything was to invite disaster. Where the moderates miscalculated was in their hope that the English would gradually relinquish their hold on the Raj and, with three cheers for Mill, pack up and go away. They eventually did, but not before a lot of Indian blood had been shed, and it was not because they did not want to stay on, but because they couldn't. The moderates were lulled into false hope by the most treacherous of all persuaders, words. All the things said by Englishmen which sounded so good and nice to the moderates were as Hamlet would say 'words, words, words'. When it came to the security of the Raj the smile on the Englishman's lips turned into a frown. And they did terrible things to preserve it. That is where they bewildered the moderates and gave strength to those who said 'There, I told you; John Bull will remain a bull.' By their system and organisation, the moderates kept the Congress alive; and that was no small a feat in those difficult times. They also realised the imperfections of their own countrymen, the bickerings, pettiness, sectionalism and lack of a common purpose. And they tried to set all this right, or at least to minimise it. Each delayed dose of reform, however, seemed like a quack's pill which gave the satisfaction of having been taken, but did nothing to cure the ill. That confirmed more and more the scepticism of the extremists. But the extremists too had no real alternative. Force is a poor weapon—that too weakened by dissent and disunity—for it can always be met by greater force. The mutiny had shown that. Besides both the moderates and the extremists were exploiting only an infinitesimal portion of the Indian population for the national struggle. It was left to Gandhi to harness the masses to it. And it was he who eschewed both submissiveness and terrorism and faced the British Raj with weapons which bewildered them by their novelty. The British could feed the freedom hungry natives with the manna

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of sweet promises. They could tackle the fighters of freedom and stamp out violence. But they did not know what to do with a frail semi-naked smiling hermit, a word from whom could wake up a whole sub-continent.

5. *Tilak and the Extremists*

During the course of his famous trial before Justice Davar in which Tilak was convicted to six years transportation for his article in the *Kesari*, he said 'There are higher powers that rule the destiny of things and it may be the will of providence that the cause which I represent may prosper more by my suffering than by my remaining free.' These words were to prove prophetically true. In their zeal the British government let loose a reign of terror against Tilak, not because they thought he had done anything wrong, but because they considered him to be a menace to the Raj. Lord Sydenham, governor of Bombay, wrote to Morley about him. 'He is one of the chief conspirators, *perhaps the chief* conspirator against the existence of the British government in India . . . '[54] The British hounded him from one jail to another, and at each homecoming Tilak returned with greater and greater popularity. Morley in England was quick to realise what the viceroy and his diehard but dense civil servants, could not. After the transportation Morley commented 'I find no reason for believing that any mischief that Tilak could have done would be so dangerous as the mischief that will be done by his sentence.'

Lokmanya (Respected of the People) Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), who is considered to be the father of the Indian freedom movement, was born on 23 July at Ratnagiri on the Konkon coast. He was a Brahmin of Chitpavan sect who had in the eighteenth and the early part of then nineteenth centuries been *de facto* rulers of the Maratha kingdom which had its capital at Poona. Tilak was associated with the foundation of the Deccan Education Society and the Fergusson

54 N.G. Jog, *Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak*, Publications Division Government of India, 1962, p. 117 *op. cit.* (Referred to hereafter as 'Jog').

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College. One of his early acts was the starting of two weeklies, the *Mahratta* in English and the *Kesari* in Marathi (1881), in association with his friend, Agarkar. While the former was a journal for the more advanced of the community, the *Kesari* was meant for the masses. The object of the Marathi journal was stated to discuss everything in an impartial and truthful manner without flattery to the British. The name 'Kesari' meant 'a lion', and Tilak promised his readers that the articles appearing in it would be in keeping with its name. Soon after their inception the weeklies came into trouble. Barve, Dewan of Kolhapur state, had been conspiring with the Maharaja's mother, and Tilak and Agarkar exposed him. Barve filed a case of criminal defamation, and the enterprising editors got four month each. For Tilak jail was to become a kind of second home. He lost weight, but was cheered when on being released hundreds welcomed him back.

Tilak initiated cow protection societies and *akharas* for physical training. He also infused life into Hindu festivals like the popular one dedicated to Ganapati which was particularly a favourite with Maharashtrians. He made the festival congregational and infused new vigour into it. 'Religious thought and devotion' he said 'may be possible even in solitude. Yet demonstration and éclat are essential to the awakening of the masses.' The Shivaji festival was inaugurated by Tilak in 1896 at Raigad where the Maratha monarch was crowned and where he died. It was a grand success. The same year when a severe famine broke out in Maharashtra followed by a disastrous plague epidemic, Tilak worked hard for the redress of the sufferers. Despite the apathy of the viceroy and the British administrators, Tilak carried out measures on his own. He established a hospital to attend to the sick, not caring for his own safety. But he was horrified at the British attitude. They even asked him to close down his hospital, and it was only when he protested to higher authorities that the unjust order was rescinded.

W.C. Rand and Lieutenant Ayerst who had perpetrated atrocities in enforcing plague measures, were murdered by a terrorist on the day of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations (23 June 1897). The authorities took this as an excuse

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for trying Tilak for sedition. The collector of Poona had threatened prominent citizens who had nothing to do with the assassinations. The *Times of India* said that the editors of the Deccan papers which had been criticising the government should be prosecuted. Tilak, while condemning the murders, had written opposing the punitive police, and had compared the government with a mad elephant trampling to dust everything which came in the way. 'To rule was not to revenge' he wrote. Was the 'government's head on its shoulders?' There was nothing incriminating in what Tilak had said, yet he was tried and convicted for sedition. On his release he was given a hero's welcome, but his health was ruined—'a skeleton, eyes sunk deep, cheeks pallid and pinched, and gait unsteady' as his nephew described him. In 1908 a bomb was hurled by two persons, Khudiram Bose and Parafulla Chaki at Kingsford, a district judge who was in the habit of giving savage sentences to political offenders. The judge was saved, but two European women were killed. The Anglo-Indian papers launched a frenzied tirade, the *Asian* suggesting that the English judge should shoot down every native he saw and the *Pioneer* demanding that 'all acknowledged terrorists' be arrested and if the offence was repeated any ten of them should be shot. Tilak could hardly tolerate such journalistic nonsense. He pointed out in articles in *Kesari* that the true remedy for such occurrences was not repression but 'the redress of popular grievances, and in making liberal concessions to the legitimate demands of the people in a spirit of sympathy and statemanship.'[55] It was a very mild reaction, yet the British government tried Tilak again for sedition and convicted him on the verdict of a nine member jury, of which seven were Europeans, to six years transporation. There were strikes in the mills, *hartal* in Bombay, and disorder, to protest against the conviction.

Six years later he was back home, his popularity greater than ever. At a reception he declared that the six years separation had not lessened his love for the people and he was willing to serve them 'in the same manner and in the same

55 Jog, 116 *op. cit.*

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relation and in the same capacity' as before.[56] He set forth a threefold task before him—to unify the Congress, reorganise the nationalist party and to form the home rule league. Tilak's first objective meant that he should gain entry into the Congress, which was at this time dominated by the moderates who resented his entry. In a leading article in the *Kesari* he wrote: 'The National Congress belongs to the nation. It is neither Tilak's nor Gokhale's property'. Shortly after, however, the Congress amended its rules and threw its doors open to the extremists. The moderates and the extremists were for once in happy amity in the Lucknow Congress of December 1916. What was more the Muslim League, too, was in co-operation and held its session simultaneously. Two momentous decisions were taken. The first, which was ominous inasmuch as it was a pointer of things to come, was reservation of Muslim seats in the provincial legislatures by separate electorates. The second was constitutional reform directed to make India a self-governing dominion in the British empire.

Tilak did not oppose the war effort and, pledging his loyalty to the British government in the crisis, assured it of full support. But he believed that India as a self-governing nation could be a thousand times more useful in helping in the war than India in slavery. The British however, only wanted money, provisions, and Indian soldiers, to fight a war in which India could have no intrinsic interest. They did not want to give anything in return, or even to diminish their mistrust of Indians. They refused to give them commissioned ranks in an army in which they fought. 'Why should we come forward' Tilak asked mournfully, 'to protect that India in which we have no rights, in which we are treated as slaves ?'

Tilak renamed *swaraj* as 'home rule' and set up the Indian Home Rule League at Poona On 28 April 1916. A similar organisation was set up in September by Mrs Annie Besant with its headquarters at Adyar, near Madras. The object was 'to attain home rule or self-government within the British

56 Jog, 136.

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empire by all constitutional means and to educate and organise public opinion in the country towards its attainment. Tilak worked for home rule in CP and Bombay while Annie Besant spread its message in the rest of India. In a whirlwind tour throughout which Tilak got a rousing response, he declared that home rule was the birth-right of every man. It was only a reiteration of what the British themselves thought. Charles Sumner said 'Where slavery is there liberty cannot be.'[57] Annie Besant's articles in the *New India* and *Commonwealth* preached the message of home rule. Her tours and campaigns stirred both Indian men and women.

The British government did not appreciate the home rulers's enthusiasm, and they retaliated by a series of hard hitting measures. The provisions of the Defence of India Act 1915 and the Indian Press Act 1910 were rigorously enforced. Students were forbidden to take part in the movement. Tilak and Mrs Besant were hauled up for sedition, and later Mrs Besant was interned. But Tilak was unmoved. 'We will remain in the empire only as equals' he said. 'We will not live in it merely as servants and load-carriers.' There was a storm of protest at British repression. Jinnah joined in, and praised the work of the home rulers in a joint meeting of the League and the Congress held on 28 July 1917.

The Montagu-Chelmsford reforms brought fresh disappointment. In a hard hitting article in the *Kesari*, 'It is Dawn, but where is the Sun?', Tilak observed 'we asked for eight annas of self-government. That report gives us one anna of responsible government and tries to tell us that is more precious than eight annas of self-government.'[58] To put the Indian point of view Tilak undertook a fourteen month's stay in England. The wily British government welcomed it. Tilak would be safer in England, where they thought he would be 'little more than a pebble on the beach.'[59] In England Tilak had a busy time fighting and losing the libel suit he had lodged against Sir Valentine Chirol, fraternising with the Labour party

57 Speech, Slavery and the Rebellion.
58 Jog, 153.
59 *Ibid*, 159.

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leaders and appearing on behalf of the Indian Home Rule League before the parliamentary joint select committee set up to consider the government of India bill. But he was refused a passport to France to lead a delegation to the peace conference. George Lansbury was greatly impressed by Tilak's 'transparent sincerity.' He was back home, tired, but with still more strenuous work to do. Events had taken an unpleasant turn during his absence. There were the Rowlatt Act, the Jallianwala Bagh atrocities, Gandhi's *satyagraha*, *hartal*, and a little rowdiness too. The entire country was enraged and discontented. Tagore had given up his knighthood to protest against the 'dumb anguish of terror' let loose. With the Montford reforms came amnesty to political offenders. While thanking His Majesty on behalf of the Indian Home Rule League for the amnesty, Tilak assured him of 'responsive co-operation.' When asked to explain he said 'co-operation is not a one way traffic ; it is mutual, what I call responsive'. He did not oppose Gandhi's non-cooperation, but was not too optimistic about it either. 'I like it well enough' he said, 'but I have my doubts as to the country being with us in the self-denying ordinances which non-cooperation presents to the people.'[60]

Tilak had been labouring hard despite his age and ill health. The end came less than a year after return from abroad. He died on 1 August 1920. 'A giant among men has fallen' said Gandhi in a tribute. 'His patriotism was a passion with him. He knew no religion but love of his country.' Jinnah called him a 'selfless patriot and a unique figure.' Maulana Hazrat Mohani said 'Tilak was greater than and superior to every other leader in every respect.' Loyal to his friends, as the Tai Maharaj and the Bapat affair prove,[61] a born fighter against exploitation and injustice, a legal wizard, scholar and patriot, Tilak has been more misunderstood than praised. It would be vain to expect British imperialists or Anglo-Indian editors

60 Jog, 167.

61 Tilak had become one of the trustees of Baba Maharaj. Tai Maharaj was his widow. S.V. Bapat was a ı officer, victim of British vengenace, whom Tilak generously helped.

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like that of the *Times of India* to say anything favourable about him. To them he was the canker in the bud of imperialism, an unpleasant revealer of British hypocricy, and of the gulf between promise and performance. But even they realised his strength. Montagu, who visited India in the autumn of 1918, recorded his impression of Tilak in his *Diary*, as 'the politician who probably has the greatest influence of any person in India.' About his exclusion from the war conference Montagu wrote 'He is at the moment probably the most powerful man in India.' During the temperance movement in Poona in 1907 a police report recorded 'The British Raj has ceased to operate in Poona. The man whose authority rules the district is Tilak.'[62] Biographers seem to sometimes ignore or misinterpret him. Robert Bryan for example says about Tilak's Shivaji speech 'There could be no clearer incitement to violent action, no clearer indication of that policy of condoning if not actually inspiring assassination, which he was shortly to adopt.'[63] Again Bryan says, 'he had, all through the most active years of his life, been ruthless in his hatred of British rule.'[64] These observations, and others like it, show ignorance of Tilak's views. He condemned unequivocally all terrorist violence. When Rand was killed, Tilak wrote 'It is extremely foolish to ignore all the good work done by individuals and the good sense and patience of a community as a whole simply because a fanatic took into his head to perpetrate *a horrible deed which we all of us equally deplore*.'[65] In the trial before Justice Davar he told the jury 'he had frequently stressed that bomb-throwing was not the method of winning *swaraj* and that it was not sanctioned by morality,'[66] As regards Tilak's 'hatred of British rule' he hated only the injustice and vindictiveness of British rule, not necessarily the English as a race. He was a lover of liberty not a hater of any particular rule. If it had been

62 Jog, 179.
63 *Great Men of India* (ed.) Rushbrook Williams, Home Library Club, p. 258
64 *Ibid*, p. 261.
65 Jog. 62 (italics author's)
66 *Ibid*, 119

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French or Portugese rule he would have hated it just as much. There are two aspects of Tilak's thinking that need to be clarified because he is often unjustly blamed about them: one is his attitude to social reform, and another his so called attempt to bolster up an anti-Muslim feeling.

Tilak's Attitude to Reform

Tilak was against imposition of any kind, and this was not only in the political field but in the social one as well. That he was not against social reform is quite clear from many of his observances relating to them. He drew up constructive proposals for reforms which were so progressive and radical that none of the so called reformers of his time were prepared to adopt them. These included the follows :[67]

1. That girls should not be married before the age of 16 or boys before the age of 20.
2. If a man wanted to marry again he should marry a widow.
3. The practice of shaving off the hair of the heads of widows should be dropped.
4. The dowry system should be abolished.
5. No man should marry after having crossed the age of 40.
6. The use of liquor should be prohibited.
7. Those who accept these reforms should contribute one-tenth of their income for promoting them.

It is believed by some writers that these proposals were a kind of taunt for the supporters of the Age of Consent Bill whereby the government wished to raise the age of consent for married as well as unmarried women from ten to twelve. The counter-proposals were to be brought 'into force by law for the reformers alone who clamoured for the Age of Consent Bill' says one biographer.[68] Nevertheless Tilak was a man who would

67 Jog, 32.
68 Dhananjay Keer, *Lokmanya Tilak*, Popular Prakashan, 1969, p. 60.

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hardly go back on his word. If the reformers agreed, he would have carried the proposals through. But they were not prepared for such drastic measures. On untouchabiltiy he held views stronger even than those advocated by Gandhi. He declared 'he would not recognise even God if He said that untouchability was ordained by Him.'

Tilak is accused of resisting reforms like the Age of Consent Bill, separation from a husband to whom a girl was married without her consent as in the Rakhmabai-Dadaji case,[69] and in opposing plague inoculation, about which he wrote in the *Kesari* 'many infectious diseases occur when some sort of very small germs enter the body when it is only about twenty-five years old...Simply because the people of India are very poor and tolerant, it is very hard to try to test half-baked scientific discoveries on them.'[70] There were four other incidents. In one Tilak objected to the holding of the Social Conference in the *pandal* (precinct) of the Poona Congress in 1895, a practice which was of long standing. Another was Tilak's objection to extend the Vedic rites to non-Brahmins. Yet another incident was one involving a woman, Pandita Ramabai, a learned Chitpavan Brahmin woman. who became a Christian. It was later discovered that she had opened an institution called Sharda Sadan which was a blind for her proselytising activities, and through it she was converting Hindus to Christianity. She even kicked away earthen pots in which the holy basil had been planted. Tilak rightly condemned Ramabai, but he has been criticised for not opening a school for Hindu girls and widows as promised in the *Kesari*, to counteract her activities. For this he cannot be blamed too much, for his entire life, crammed with political activities and punctuated with long periods in jail, could hardly have left him time to fulfil his promise. But he

69 Rakhmabai claimed she was married to Dadaji without her consent and so she could not be forced to live with him. Dadaji pleaded for restitution of conjugal rights. The claim of Rakhmabai was allowed by the lower court, but dismissed in appeal by the High Court, as it was against the Hindu law. But there was a lot of public sympathy for her and even funds were raised.

70 *Kesari*, 25 September 1901.

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made up for it by awakening the Hindu consciousness which had begun to doze. Finally there was the incident known as the 'Panchhoud episode' in which both the reformers and their opponents were tricked into drinking tea at a mission school by one Gopalrao Joshi, who then gleefully publicised their names the next day. Both Ranade and Tilak were among the 'culprits'. The matter went up to Shankaracharya, the highest Hindu ecclesiastical authority. Ranade carried out the expiatory rites prescribed by Hindu *shastras*, while Tilak did so only on his own terms, even at the price of excommunication.

About these specific matters it might be said in Tilak's defence that he may have been inconsistent in his stand at times but had his own reasons for following the course he did. The Age of Consent Bill was doubtless an innocuous measure which provoked much needless controversy. Tilak's viewpoint was that such reform should come from within, not from without. It all began with Malabari who agitated more about it in England than in India. A foreign government, Tilak urged had no right to legislate on social and religious issues. He did not agree with Ranade and others that state intervention was not necessarily an evil. He did not want any anglicisation of the country. Of course there was much justification on the side of those too who thought such interference proper. Telang for example said, 'I entirely agree that the remedy for removing India's social ills does not lie in anglicising India. But to say or suppose, as so many present do, that those who desire social reform want to anglicise the country socially, is at a least as great and as injurious a misapprehension as to say that those who want political reforms want to anglicise the country politically.'[71] But Tilak's stand was not entirely pointless. His was a sensitive spirit resenting any kind of imposition from outside. What he did not like about the Age of Consent Bill was that it should be foisted on the Indian people by an alien government. When the British did not want to give India freedom, he argued, how could it be supposed they were so concerned about ameliorating Indian conditions? If reforms were to come, he

71 Limaye, *The History of the Deccan Education Society*, p. 102. Quoted in D. Keer, *Lokmanya Tilak*, Popular Prakashan, 1969, p. 59.

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reasoned, let them come from within. Then they would be the expression of the people and have the freshness of a rose on the twig, not the saplessness of one in the vase. Unless society itself was ready for a reform, the reform would be a dead letter, as for example the Dowry Act in a dowry ridden society or the Sharda Act for one in which child marriages were firmly entrenched. What was needed was a change of attitude not legislation, otherwise legislation would be endless and even laughable. 'If we want Acts and resolutions to regulate child marriages, then why not have Dinner Acts, Sandhya Adoration Acts and Bathing Time Acts' he wrote in the *Kesari* in a trenchant attack on the Age of Consent Bill.

Another thing which Tilak resented was the weakening of the Hindu *shastras*. This was the basis of his stand in the Rakhmabai case. It was not the question of one woman repudiating the conjugal relations, sanctioned by the wedlock, which were sacramental. The issue was a wider one. If the *shastras* were flouted Hinduism would be weakened. Religion would become a mockery. Western influence reinforced by missionary zeal would effectually erode Indian society, as to had already started doing. For example the boy whom his parents took to a Kali temple and who instead of prostrating himself like others before the deity greeted her by saying 'Good morning, madam'[72] ! It was the rocklike strength of Hindu religion, which got its vigour from the immortal teachings of the *Gita* and the Vedanta, that had defied the powerful waves of Islamic militancy and Christian exploitation for hundreds of years. Tilak did not want the pickaxe of westernism to work upon this rock.

Tilak believed that reforms could work only if the reformers too acted upon them. That was why in the seven reforms he proposed, one was that those who accepted them should contribute from their pocket for their promotion. Nanak, the great Sikh saint, has said :

> 'There are those who profess one thing and practice another
> Who talk like devotees with no love in their hearts.

72 *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, (ed.) R.C. Majumdar, Bhavan, vol. x Part 2, 1965, p. 90 *op. cit.*

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But the Lord in his wisdom knoweth all things
The mere outward garment cannot please him.
He who preacheth to others what he cannot practise
Shall be born and die again in unending lives.'[73]

How many there were (and still are) who got their boys educated in Anglo Indian schools and preached to others the virtues of vernacular education; who got their minor daughters wedded and agitated against child marriages ; who did not have the guts to find matches for widows in their families, yet campaigned for removing the stigma on widowhood? Tilak rightfully decried such hypocrisy.

Regarding inoculation, again Tilak was not against it in principle. He only opposed its being thrust upon unwilling persons. In fact while he was in the jail in Bombay, Tilak took an anti-plague inoculation himself, though it was then in an experimental stage, so as to set an example to other prisoners.[74] The same aversion to force being used to accomplish a reform was at the back of his being opposed to compulsion on Brahmin priests to perform Vedic rites in non-Brahmin families. This would not only compel the priests to do what they might be unwilling to do, it would also forfeit their *inams*. When Tilak was excommunicated because he did not properly perform the prescribed penance for drinking tea in a Christian club, and Brahmin priests would not perform religious rites at his house, he performed them himself. But he would not bend.

Tilak was a politician first, and everything else afterwards. He believed that freedom was a magic wand that would transform all things. Once it came, social reform would automatically follow. He did not harm his political creed in his seeming opposition to social reform, which, as we have seen was not so much opposition, as putting reform in its right perspective. If anything, he rather strengthened his political creed by his attitude. It was not as Agarkar, his friend and later his bitter

73 *Selection from the Sacred writings of the Sikhs*, Allen and Unwin, 1960.
74 Jog, 69

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critic, put it, the result 'of calculation, rather than of conviction; that he trimmed his sails to catch the winds of popularity.'[75] His political achievements alone brought him so much popularity that he could never possibly feel its dearth; so he need not have depended on social reform for it. His stand on social reform was rather to make it fit in with his political creed of 'no strangers in the house.' He returned for inspiration to conservatism, not for exploiting it. The ancient Vedas were to him the springs of rejuvination. A historian has said, 'The reformer has to spread knowledge; the politician has to generate power. The former has to resort to persuasion; the latter to some sort of coercion. Tilak understood the problem correctly . . .[76] Tilak, however, was never for coercion, whether in reform or in politics. He was of course at times frank and outspoken, even somewhat crude in comparison to his highly refined opponents like Gokhale and Ranade. But that was only his way of expression. He had named his paper *Kesari* 'the lion,' and it could only roar. He was so much coerced by others that he hardly had the opportunity or the will to coerce anybody. In fact that was why he came to hate coercion so much. He did all his work by persuasion alone. But what a wonderful persuader he was.

Tilak and the Minorities

Tilak's detractors often condemn his sponsoring of Hindu festivals as being an evidence of his anti-Muslim attitude. Sir Valentine Chirol says that theatrical performances and religious songs containing legends of Hindu mythology were skilfully exploited by Tilak to stir up hatred of foreigners. This was certainly not Tilak's objective. In fact, on the contrary, he observed that it was the Muslims who 'forgetting our long-standing friendship played into the hands of undesirable people and began a regular campaign of harassing Hindu religious mendicants.' The Ganapati festival was observed by Tilak to protest against this anti-Hindu attitude and also against the

75 *BRG*, 246 *op. cit.*
76 D.S. Sharma, *Renaissance of Hinduism.* Quoted by Jog, 37.

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partiality shown by the British government towards Muslims. He is criticised for inaugurating the Shivaji festival which was likely to strir up Muslim. If we closely examine what he wrote in the *Mahratta* about this, it will at once be seen how baseless this charge is. The following are some extracts from the article:

'It is not preached nor is it to be at all expected that the methods adopted by Shivaji should be adopted by the present generation....The Shivaji festival is not celebrated to alienate or even to irritate the Mohammedans. Times are changed, and ....the Mohammedans and Hindus stand in the same boat or on the same platform so far as the political condition of the people is concerned. Can we not both of us derive some inspiration from the life of Shivaji under these circumstances?. . . . . We are not against a festival being started in honour of Akbar or any other hero from old Indian history.... A future leader may be born anywhere in India (not particularly in Maharashtra) and who knows, may even be a Mohammeden.'[77]

Doubtless much of the Muslim animosity was purposely created by Anglo-Indian journals which took full opportunity to highlight the Afzal Khan incident and provoke the Muslims, ignoring the real spirit in which Tilak had organised the festival. His charge against the British government was that they were trying to pitch Hindus against Muslims. It was to a large extent true. He appealed to his Muslim brethren not to play into the hands of the British bureaucrats and create situations they could exploit. 'If Muslims cannot bear the music at the time of prayers in mosques' he pertinently asked, 'how do they offer their prayers in trains, ships and shops? Apart from that their scripture prescribes that a Muslim should offer prayers at sunrise, noon and sunset wherever he may happen to be. It follows, therefore, that it is wrong to say that music interferes with prayers or that music before a mosque is irreligious or blasphemous. These wrong ideas must have been impressed on them by some self-seeking and mischievous agencies. It is easy to settle this question of music before mosques if Muslims

77 B.G. Tilak, *His Writings and Speeches*, Madras, 1919 p. 48-51.

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adopt a reasonable attitude.'[78] Tilak warned the Muslims that the British government was equally against them as against the Hindus, and that it emphasised the differences between them merely to create division. 'It is no use feeling puffed up by government's partiality or preferential treatment' he told them. 'When the time for a real trial comes, both Hindus and Muslims would be considered equally insignificant and relentlessly put down.'[79] Tilak appealed to the governor of Bombay to ask his officers 'to hold the scales even' between the two communities. But the British had found the divide and rule policy a potent weapon for Indian colonial administration, and they were not prepared to abandon it. A man is better judged by his deeds than by his words. And Tilak's support to the Muslim demand for separate representation at the Lucknow Session at once does away with any accusation against him of causing a Hindu-Muslim rift. Jinnah backed Tilak through and through. It was he who pressed for his bail before Justice Davar, and in a session of the Muslim League held simultaneously with the Lucknow Session of the Congress gave the specific assurance that the League 'stands abreast of the Indian National Congress and is ready to participate in any patriotic efforts for the advancement of the country as a whole.'

The extremists made a valuable contribution to the national movement. But they were not able to capture the masses, as Gandhi could. In a huge country like India with its tendency to uphold the cult of hero worship, Tilak did not lack adulators. At every halt in his train journeys during the home rule campaign there were deafening shouts of '*jai's*.' It was not by rail, however, that one could in those days penetrate into the Indian villages. Gandhi did it by his *pada yatras*, like the historic Dandi march. The common people, the workers and peasants, were beyond the pale of the extremist movement. As the *Yugantar* wrote 'The remedy lies in the people themselves. The thirty crore of people inhabiting India must raise their sixty crore of hands to stop this course of oppression.'[80]

78 Jog, 51-2 (*Kesari* 1893) *op. cit.*
79 Jog, 52 *op. cit.*
80 *Yugantar*, 22 April, 1906.

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Another flaw in the stand taken by the extremists was in their glaring inconsistencies. They wished to unite the various sections and communities, as Tilak's role in the Lucknow Congress shows, yet they agreed to communal electorates in the Lucknow Pact of 29 December 1916, which in the long run divided more than it united. The agreement proved to be a temporary reconciliation, made possible mainly because of Muslim dissatisfaction with Britain's handling of Turkey, but the ills it perpetrated were damaging and ultimately led to the vivisection of the country. Tilak's conservatism, too, was a double-edged weapon. It srengthened his position amongst the reactionaries, but brought him into conflict with the progressive intelligentsia. It did not harm his political stature much, but certainly curtailed his universality. The acrimonious language he often used did not make things any better. It was all right when he wished to drive home a point, but it was not so good when he spoke to pull down others. The exremists began to be dreaded, and from fear to hate is a short jump. The hatred soon became mutual. It was so bad that when one of the prominent extremists and friend of Tilak, G.S. Kharparde, learnt about Gokhale's death, he wrote in his diary 'I am sorry he did not live long enough to endure the consequences of his double dealing and roguery.[81] The remark proved Shakespeare's famous observation about the good of people being 'oft interred with their bones,'[82] but it was unforgivably malicious. The extremists suffered in their appeal because of their inconsistencies, sectionalism and short-sightedness, but the single prominent reason for their not being able to make a dent on British imperialism was that they lacked the comon touch.

The Terrorist Movement

Tilak did not openly subscribe to the terrorist creed but his sympathies were with the terrorists. He often said that he would join a revolt provided there was a reasonable chance

81 *BRG*, 474 *op. cit.* (Kharparde Diary, 20 February 1915).
82 *Julius Caesar*, III. II. 81.

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of its success. 'Three p's...pray, please and protest...will not do.' he said, 'unless backed by solid force. Look to the example of Ireland, Japan and Russia and follow their methods. We must show that the country cannot be governed well by the present method. We must convince the government of this.'[83] Tilak would not have advocated the kind of terrorist activity in which the assault was on individuals, like the bomb thrown at Kingsford which, instead of killing him, killed two innocent women, or the attack on Hardinge, and so forth. What he had in mind was more an organised revolt against the British rule itself. Such a revolt had been attempted in 1857. It failed largely due to the absence of concerted effort, but it kept the English rulers anxious for a long time. The revolutionaries doubtless got some measure of inspiration from Europe, Japan, Russia and the Young Turks, but the ruthless repression in India itself was enough to incite them. The mutiny was stamped out brutally and a large number of Indians who had not even taken part in it were massacred by English soldiers. Before the old wounds healed new ones were created, culminating in blood-baths like one at Jallianwala.

The terrorists tried to demoralise the British rulers by individual attacks through bombs and bullets, picking out those civil servants who were ruthless because they were dominated by racial prejudices, as for example Rand, Kingsford etc. But sometime the assaults misfired and innocent people were murdered instead. There were organised revolts also as in Rawalpindi where the Arya Samajists were active. The Bharat Mata Society organised by Sardar Ajit Singh in the Punjab agitated against the Colonisation Act. The Sardar addressed many meetings of the farmers there, starting his speech with a favourite heroic song of Banke Dayal. *Pagri sambhal oh ! jatta* (0 peasant! take care of your turban, i.e. self-respect). Another organised movement was that of the Ghadar party whose object was to start an all-India revolt with the assistance of Indian troops and local revolutionaries. Millions of dollars were collected for this and appeals sent out

83 Dhananjay Keer, *Lokmanay Tilak*, Popular Prakashan, 1969, p. 244.

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to Indian soldiers serving in the Far East and SE Asia apart from those in India itself. The movement was organised, among others, by Rash Behari Bose, Sachindar Sanyal, Ganesh Pingale and Baghi Kartar Singh, and was to begin on 21 February 1915. But one Kirpal Singh passed on all their secret plans to the government, and the revolt was suppressed.

The revolutionary movement was continued after the war, but while the early revolutionaries were inspired by the writings of Aurobindo, Vivekananda and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, and by the teachings of the *Gita*, the later revolutionaries took their inspiration from Karl Marx, Engels and Lenin. The slogans also changed from 'Bande Mataram' 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' and so forth, to Inqilab Zindabad' and 'Down With Imperialism'. Sardar Bhagat Singh threw a bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly in New Delhi. He surrendered himself and was hanged along with others. There took place the famous Kakori incident in which some revolutionaries tried to take away money from the iron box on the train. Forty persons were arrested and after a trial which was mere farce, Ram Prasad Bismil, Roshan Singh, Rajendra Lahiri and others were executed.

The revolutionaries propagated their ideas through pamphlets and leaflets containing fiery speeches and inflammatory verses. A certain section of the press also espoused their cause by publishing short stories, plays and essays about them. Photographs of martyrs, badges and so forth were sold, and bought with enthusiam. When Khudi Ram, who had attempted to kill Kingsford, was hanged, youngmen began to wear dhotis with his name woven into the borders. Weapons were, of course, the mainstay of the revolutionaries, because they believed in force. V.D. Savarkar, a revolutionary leader, sent a parcel containing twenty Browning automatic pistols with ammunition to Bombay concealed in the false bottom of a box. Slogans were used to maintain the fervour of people at a high pitch. These were such as could easily be uttered by mobs to keep their morale high, as for example 'Om', 'Ram Hari', 'Allaho Akbar', 'Sat Sri Akal' etc. Money of course was needed for carrying out such activities. Secret funds by subscriptions were raised, but the revolutionaries

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were hard pressed for money. It was this difficulty which led to the Kakori case.

The revolutionary concept was nothing new. When oppression reaches a limit, revolt is the only way out. It is not in human nature to relinquish power and wealth unless forced to do so. The pent up hatred for oppressors is apt to find a way by assaults on them. As Vienzac said, 'The tree of liberty will grow only when watered by the blood of tyrants.'[84] Thomas Jefferson, third President of USA once declared: 'Our cause is just . . The arms we have been compelled by our enemies to assume we will, in defiance of every hazard, with unabating firmness and perseverence, employ for the preservation of our liberties; being with one mind resolved to die free men rather than live slaves.'[85]

The revolutionaries did a lot to wake up the Indian consciousness. Their sacrifices, indifference to life and death, patriotism and stirring valour, were an undying source of inspiration for freedom fighters. Where others wrote the story of Indian freedom with long articles, speeches, handcuffs and fetters, they wrote it with their blood. They joyfully surrendered in the service of their country the most precious thing they had. But to be successful a revolution needs something more than sacrifice. It needs money, organisation, planning and above all unity. The revolutionaries lacked almost all of these. There were quislings among them, and more often than not their secrets leaked out. The government could, therefore, crush them even before they had the chance to strike. It was difficult for many of them not to resist the temptation of gossiping. Although the revolutionaries could move people emotionally, they were not able to carry the masses with them. Muslims studiously kept away from the revolutionary movement in Bengal. Like the moderates and the extremists, the revolutionaries too were confined to a section of the people. Only a few could take the risks they took and fewer still were prepared for courting death. It was left to Mahatma Gandhi

84 Bertrand Barere de Vienzac, Speech in National Assembly, 1972
85 Thomas Jefferson, Declaration of the Causes of Taking up Arms, 6 July 1775.

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to make novel experiments in Indian politics, to involve the masses in the national struggle and to devise methods which, while seeming innocuous, shook the British government to its very foundations.

The Triumph of Mahatma Gandhi

Influences and Technique

Right through the Indian national movement in the first half of the twentieth century. Gandhi was the dominating figure, or the dominating influence. Even when he retired for his spells of social work, he was the showman who pulled the strings. Much has been written to analyse and explain what makes him stand out from other prominent leaders of the national movement; what inner strength made him turn furious mobs bent on communal violence into friendly crowds embracing each other and yelling 'Hindu-Muslim *bhai bhai* !; what made the heart of the Indian nation miss a beat when he went on his fast unto death ; what made Jawaharlal Nehru say when he died 'the light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere' ; and why do we call him, and not anyone else, the father of the nation. When everything is said and written about the secret of his greatness, and about the success of his methods, it must still remain a mystery. It would be, as Marlowe said of the poets:

> 'Yet should there hover in their restless heads,
> One thought, one grace, one wonder at the least,
> Which into words no virtue can digest.'[86]

He was not born great, and though he was thorough and methodical, many others had striven more to achieve greatness ; and greatness was certainly not thrust upon him. Perhaps the clue can be obtained from examining what was dearest to him. His favourite song was '*vaishnava jan ko te nahi kahi ye*,' and its teaching was 'know the sorrows of others' and 'do good,

86 Christopher Marlowe, 1564-93, *Conquests of Tamburlaine*.

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but do feel puffed up because of it'. That was in a way the secret of Gandhi's success with people. A more unassuming man there never was, and he had the good of everyone, with humility, in his heart. The *Ramacharitamanasa*, which had an overpowering influence on him, says:

> 'For him in whose mind the good of others is always enshrined,
> Nothing in this world is difficult of achievement.'[87]

Service gave Gandhi strength; and he was always ready to serve others and to serve his country. That is why he could accomplish what others could not. He did not look upon men as Hindus or Muslims, untouchables or Brahmins. To him all were just men. If they needed service he served them, if they were in sorrow he tried to remove whatever little of it he could. That is why he periodically went into seclusion. At moments when other politicians would not quit the political scene for the world, Gandhi would be cheering up some sick or wounded man by the lantern light, far away in some dirty hovel. Just as there are many nurses, but selfless service produced one Florence Nightingale, so there were many politicians, but one Gandhi. Indians are a sensitive and emotional race. They react to sympathy with the same intensity as to slight. That is why they cheeered Mountbatten even though he partitioned their country, but could not stand Curzon who partitioned only a province. And that is why they reserved for Gandhi the love they gave to no other man.

Historians trace out the influences on Gandhi as the *Ramayana*, the *Gita*, intense faith in God, the quest of truth and non-violence (*ahimsa*). Later on he found that other religions also verified what his native one taught him, as for example Jainism and Christianity (in the Sermon on the Mount). Christ, Daniel, Socrates and Tolstoy were his inspiration for 'soul force'. Non-violence was the creed, he

87 *Aranyakanda*, 30 : 5.

88 *Essays on Gandhian Politics*, (ed.) R. Kumar (A.L. Basham, Traditional Influences on the Thought of Mahatma Gandhi), Oxford, 1971, p. 20.

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believed, of Zoroaster, Mahavir, Jesus, Nkana and others. Basham says Gandhi was particularly moved by a Gujarati poet, Shyamal Bhatt, who wrote :

For a bowl of water give a goodly meal ;
For a kindly greeting bow thou down with zeal ;
For a simple penny pay thou back with gold ;
If thy life be rescued, life do not withhold.
Every little service tenfold they reward.
But the truly noble know all men as one.
And return with gladness good for evil done.

Simple in his dress, habits, food, and possessions, Gandhi was a true son of his native land. Traditional Hindu austerity which the scriptures enjoined and Hindu philosophy praised, was his. Religion is the bulwark of Indian life. Faith in god and destiny keeps its hungry millions satisfied and contented. Gandhi soon realised this and he began as a spiritualist and idealist rather than as a politician. It came naturally to him also, for his whole culture and background prepared him for it. When Gandhi came from South Africa, where he had experimented with his technique of *satyagraha* and non-violence, he was taken by many like Gokhale, his *guru*, as a crank. Englishmen, as a historian points out, considered him to be 'strangely unpolitical.'[89] Edwin Montagu noted in his diary that Gandhi was 'a social reformer with a desire to find grievances and cure them... he dresses like a coolie, forswears all personal advancement, lives practically on air and is a pure visionary.'[90] Had Montagu studied closely the Indian character, he would have known that such a man was likely to prove a more powerful opponent than 'political' politicians. For India reveres no one more than a saint and reformer. Gandhi had already tried out his instrument of non-violent non-cooperation in South Africa. But that was in an alien land. Here, in India, where saints got the biggest audiences, Gandhi

89 B.R. Nanda, *Gokhale, Gandhi and the Nehrus*, Allen and Unwin, 1974, p. 61.

90 *Ibid* (Edwin S. Montagu, *An Indian Diary*, 1930, p. 58).

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had only to extend his appeal to those areas where neither Gokhale nor Tilak had penetrated—the far flung Indian villages where lived most of the people— and they would welcome him with open arms. Obviously the villages could not come to him ; he had to go to them. Discarding trains, Gandhi walked. He liked walking, and he walked through the famous Dandi march, stopping at wayside villages, sharing their food, living like one of them. Here at last, thought they, we have a leader who is one amongst us. His simple habits, his religious mind and thought, his austerity, firmly established him in their esteem. Word soon went round that a saint leader had arisen. Defining his concept of *satyagraha*, Gandhi wrote:

'The term was coined by me in order to distinguish it from the movement then going on under the name of passive resistance. Its root meaning is "holding on to truth,", hence truth-force. I have also called it love-force or soul-force In the application of *satyagraha* I discovered in the earliest stages that pursuit of truth did not permit violence being inflicted on one's opponent, but that he must be weaned from error by patience and sympathy. For what appears truth to the one may appear error to the other. And patience means self-suffering. So the doctrine came to mean vindication of truth, not by the infliction of suffering on the opponent, but on one's own self.'

Knowing that religion was the driving force among his people, Gandhi entered politics through religion. Tilak put politics above religion. Not so Gandhi, who rather used it to get political support. Although he fought relentlessly for the untouchables, even undertaking a fast unto death on the issue, he knew the importance of caste, community and religion. So he described caste as a creative institution. 'I am one of those' said, 'who do not consider caste to be a harmful institution. In its origin caste was a wholesome custom, and promoted national well-being. In my opinion the idea that inter-dining and inter-marriage is necessary for national growth is a superstition borrowed from the West.' There was only one way to hold together the various castes and communities, and that was through their religion. He was able to get the Muslims on his side that way too by exploiting their feelings in the matter of Turkey. But the Khilafat

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movement was short-lived and with the abolition of the caliphate it faded out. The slant on communism, however, widened the gulf between the two communities and ultimately culminated in partition.

Gandhi's dominance in the National Mo ement from 1919 *to* 1947

Right from 1919 to 1947 Gandhi's was the dominating personality in the Indian national movement. This was the period of the Rowlatt *satyagraha*, the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, the Khilafat movement, non-violent non-cooperation, the Dandi march, the Quit India campaign and the ills of partition (which came in 1947). The secret of Gandhi's leadership was his mass contact, the novelty of his methods—mainly *satyagraha*, non-violent non-cooperation—the emphasis on truth and *ahimsa*, the exploitation of religion, and agitation over matters which affected the majority, like the salt tax; his complete sincerity of purpose, and, most of all, his magnetic personality.

Despite Gandhi's achievements in South Africa, he was comparatively little known as a political leader in India when he returned in 1915. He did not control any important political organisation nor had he been able to gain the confidence of the Indian National Congress. Yet in a few years he was not only able to dominate the Congress but also to win the devotion of the prominent personalities in it; so much so that he became their mentor and guide. Most of this leadership was achieved by his brilliant organisation of the Rowlatt *satyagraha* movement, which to most of the prominent Congressmen seemed to be a mad venture. When he decided on launching the movement, he proceeded to create an effective organisation for it. The home rulers whom Tilak had mobilised proved of great assistance in this, but Gandhi had to break new ground by establishing a Satyagraha Sabha, with its headquarters at Bombay. The members of this Sabha had to take a pledge to carry out the movement. Committees of this parent body were set up in various places like Delhi, Allahabad etc., to organise the *satyagraha* on an all-India scale. The Sabha and its various branches publicised Gandhi's campaign, mobilised people for it, and spelt out for their benefit the non-violent

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nature of the *satyagraha*. Indian newspapers donated space for publicity without charging anything. Most of the organisers, who were prominent figures like J.B. Kripalani, Vallabhai Patel and Rajendra Prasad, travelled at their private expense. The committees raised their own funds with the support of business-men, merchants and well-to-do lawyers. Gandhi himself went round addressing meetings and personally explaining the nature of the *satyagraha* campaign. It was this solid work, organisation and publicity, combined with Gandhi's extraordinary rapport with all kinds of men, which made *satyagraha* effective. Such was Gandhi's magic that Rajendra Prasad wrote 'a change seemed to have come over our lives. While this work enabled the villagers to shed their fear complex, we too became fearless.'[91]

Gandhi's effect on the masses impressed the Congress. Here was a man, they thought, who has been able to get in a couple of years that popular following which we have been vainly trying for through the past quarter of a century ; and by 1920 Gandhi was able to capture its control and transform it from a purely deliberative body to one capable of carrying out his agitations.

It was through the Congress that the non-cooperation movements and the Quit India campaign were later organised. But Gandhi took care to carry on his individual work as well. The Dandi march which he personally led, the protest fasts he undertook, his constructive programme in the villages which included spinning of *khadi*, tending the sick and wounded, and preaching communal amity, kept his personal effort alive. Even when he was not active in the Congress, he was active somewhere. Never did he know a moment's rest.

All through his life Gandhi fought a dual struggle. One was, of course, the external one, the struggle for freedom, the other and vastly more agonising, the inner struggle to vindicate his principles. He was a devotee of truth and non-violence. He once said to Mulk Raj Anand, 'The truth must be told—never mind whom it hurts. It is truth even if it hurts.'[92] Truth and

91 Rajendra Prasad, *Autobiography*, Asia, 1957, pp. 86 and 93.
92 *Mahatma Gandhi 100 years*, (ed.) S. Radhakrishnan, Gandhi Peace Foundation, 1968, p. 19.

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non-violence, Gandhi used to say, are as old as the hills. For him truth was a burning passion, and he would have fully subscribed to the Upanishadic view that 'truth alone triumphs'. For Gandhi the concept of truth was not merely theoretical. He observed it rigorously in politics which is said by Machiavelli to have 'no relation to morals.' When most Indian leaders did not favour paying Pakistan 550 million rupees, its unpaid share of cash balances under the partition agreements, for fear the money may be used by Pakistan to finance the war in Kashmir against India, Gandhi, who was undergoing a fast to death, wept on Patel's trying to persuade him to agree to non-payment. Non-payment was doubtless an expedient step, but a promise was a promise, and according to Gandhi's view of truth, it had to be kept. Truth and non-violence were closely allied. When Gandhi found violence erupting in the Chauri Chaura incident, he called off the civil disobedience movement, even though he realised it was political suicide. This was all part of Gandhi's inner struggle, the one in which he was all by himself. Non-violence demanded a certain self-discipline and preparedness. Whenever Gandhi found he had misjudged the circumstances, or his own people, he sadly folded up his scheme and went away into the wilderness to gather strength and atone for his error. It was something which bewildered most of his disciples and colleagues, for they weighed his act in the scales of utility, while Gandhi's only measure was truth :

> 'This above all, to thine own self be true,
> And it must follow, as the night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man.'[93]

Gandhi's earnest belief was that non-violence could transform those who were bent on violence, and make them desist from it. Violence would only lead to more violence, and there would be no end to it. Besides it would create hatred on both sides, and this would be completely against Gandhi's doctrine of hate the wrong but not the wrongdoer. Gandhi believed further that 'non-cooperation with evil was as much a duty as co-operation

93 Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, I. iii. 78-80.

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with good.'[94] In opposing an evil system of government he believed 'one could be disloyal to it and actively and openly preach disloyalty.' Again he said 'it is our first duty to render obedience to law, but whilst doing that duty I have also seen that when law fosters untruth it becomes a duty to disobey it.'[95] In practical terms civil disobedience implied boycott of foreign goods and use of *swadeshi*, no tax campaigns, disobeying unjust laws, and non-cooperation by peaceful means like *hartals*, protest demonstrations, banners, surrender of titles and honorary offices, refusal to accept government posts, boycott of government posts, boycott of government schools, councils and government functions, and so forth.

Gandhi's ideas on Economic and Social Reform

Economic and social reform, Gandhi believed, should go hand in hand with spiritual resurgence. He was not against machines or mechanisation, but he did not want machines to be so labour saving as to throw a number of men out of employment. About this he wrote in 1924 :

> 'What I object to is the *craze* for machinery, not machinery as such. The *craze* is for what they call labour-saving machinery. Men go on "saving labour", till thousands are without work and thrown in the open street to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all ; I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery helps a few to ride on the back of millions. The impetus behind it is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might.'[96]

These view may not sound quite in consonance with modern

94 Gandhi's speech in his trial of 1922.

95 Dr. S.A. Bari, *Gandhi's Doctrine of Civil Resistance*, Kamlakar Prakashan, 1971, p. 163, *op. cit.*

96 N.K. Bose (ed.) *Selections from Gandhi*, Ahmedabad, 1957 p. 66.

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ideas about industrial expansion, but it must not be forgotten that the circumstances of under-developed countries are quite different from those of the developed ones, and what is true of one cannot be true of the other. The majority of Indian people lived (and still live), in villages, and products manufactured by them were largely for internal consumption, for they fulfilled the needs and the tastes of the village people. When the East India Company came, their servants started making a wreck of India's indigenous industry, particularly the textiles. Bengal weavers who made fine fabrics, cottons and silks, were forced, often on pain of flogging, to deliver their goods to them at unfair throw away prices. Numberless weavers were thrown out of employment and suffered in misery. From the beginning of the eighteenth century the British parliament made laws to discourage the use of Indian textiles in England. Instead, raw cotton was sent out at cheap rates from India and after being manufactured into cloth by the Lanca hire mills imported to India at high rates. In the second half of the nineteenth century a few cotton mills were set up in India which, between them, produced more cloth than the total village handloom production. This completely uprooted the village industry. Although there was some industrialisation between the years 1881 to 1931 in India, there was hardly any appreciable increase in employment of labour. These factors led Gandhi to emphasise the resuscitation of village industries. 'I have no partiality' he wrote 'for return to the primitive methods of grinding and husking for the sake of them. I suggest the return because there is no other way of giving employment to the millions of villagers who are living in idleness. This too was his object in making the *charkha* (hand-spinning-wheel) and the *tikli* (small instrument for spinning) symbols of his *swadeshi* campaign. In 1946 Gandhi said '*khadi* (hand-spun cloth) will cease to have any value in my eyes if it does not usefully employ the millions.'[98]

There was also the problem of increased pressure on land

97 *Harijan*, 30 November 1934.

98 D.G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, Delhi, 1962, vol. 7, p. 187.

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due to overpopulation. Since there was no law of primogeniture in India, all the heirs of a deceased succeeded to the land. There was fragmentation of holdings, and those who were put off the land had no alternative except to work as labourers or migrate to nearby towns in search of a job, business, or other work. The population of towns increased but it did not ease unemployment. The unemployed roamed about towns and villages either starving or forced into undesirable activities. Gandhi's emphasis, therefore, was on providing work for the maximum number of people. 'Our real malady' he said, 'is not destitution but laziness.' He wanted everyone to be doing something, if possible producing something, rather than idling away or wasting time in useless gossip.

Gandhi was not against the development of essential heavy industries. 'I believe that some key industries are necessary', he wrote. Where such an industry needed a large number of workers, he favoured the state running it. Or better still a kind of trusteeship, so that there would be no absolute ownership and the wealth coming from such ventures would be held in trust for the community as a whole.[99]

Gandhi brought about a revolution in society as well. He inspired people whom he led to shake off despondency and defeatism, and reminded them of their inner strength as members of the common brotherhood of men. *Khadi* became the symbol of *swadeshi* and the uniform of freedom fighters. It was to remind them of the village hands which had spun it into cloth and of the dignity of labour. Gandhi changed the concept of labour as something degrading—a concept, alas, too often prevailing in Indian society. He did it by his own precept and example. His efforts to remove untouchability were determined and sustained. He even went to the extent of saying 'If I had my way, I would persuade all caste-Hindu girls coming under my influence to marry Harijan husbands.' He did not make 'anti-untouchability work part of a wider crusade against the caste system', because he did not have the vanity

99 Gandhi, *India and the World*, (ed.) S. Roy, Nachiketa Pubs., 1970, 1970, p. 252.

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to think that he commanded so much influence as to 'convert the entire Hindu society' to his view.[100]

Gandhi took the vow of *brahmacharya* just before his first South African civil disobedience campaign in 1906. He was a strong advocate of celibacy, which again is one of the qualities highly praised in Hindu culture. In fact it was considered to be one of the stages—the earliest one—of the four *asharamas* of Hindu life (the other three being a family life, living in the forest, and wandering as a mendicant). Gandhi was all for the emancipation of women. He insisted on women having equal rights with men. 'Woman' he said, 'is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in very minutest detail in the activities of man, and she has an equal right of freedom and liberty with him.'[101] Basham thinks that 'We can safely attribute his (Gandhi's) views on the place of women in society to the influence of Western feminism.'[102] He bases his conclusion on the fact that Gandhi admitted as late as 1898 the 'thought that the wife was the object of the husband's lust, born to do her husband's behest, rather than a helpmate, a comrade and a partner.'[103] But Gandhi died in 1948, and 1898 cannot be said to be particularly 'late' in his life. His views kept changing, even on the subject he considered most important—truth. That is why he called his quest for truth, 'experiments.' Women were already equal with men in Hindu society. Gandhi knew that. Writing about 'Woman's Role' he said, 'But, somehow or other, man has dominated woman from ages past, and so woman has developed an inferiority complex. She has believed in the truth of man's interested teaching that she is inferior to him. *But the seers* among men have recognised her equal status.'[104] A verse of the *Rig Veda* says about a Hindu wife :

100 *Mahatma Gandhi 100 Years*, (ed.) S. Radhakrishnan, Gandhi Peace Foundation, 1968, pp. 158-9.

101 Speech at the Morarji Gokuldas Hall, Bombay.

102 *Essays on Gandhian Politics*, (ed.) R. Kumar, Oxford, 1971, p. 41 (Basham : *Traditional Influence on the Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi*).

103 *Ibid.*

104 *To the Women*, Gandhi Series, vol. II (ed.) Anand T. Hingorani 1941, p. 27 (italics author's).

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'So rule and govern in your home
Over your husband's parents,
His brothers and sisters too
Are likewise subject to you.'[105]

A number of women *rishis* find mention in the Vedic period such as Lopamudra, Apala, Vak and so forth. In the *Upanishads* we come across accomplished women saints and philosophers like Maitreyi and Gargi Vachaknavi. Panini, the ancient grammarian, mentions that women taught in Vedic schools.[106] Manu said 'where women are honoured the gods rejoice, but where they are not, all rites are fruitless.'[107] Thus Gandhi need not have gone to 'Western feminism' for his liberal views on women. Whatever the case may be, his ideas had a great influence on the Indian society of his day. Many women started taking an active role in politics. Gandhi encouraged women to come out of their homes and contribute to the national struggle. A large number of them took part in the Dandi march. He asked them to 'spin for sacrifice', and to use *swadeshi*, and to even be ready 'to enter the line of fire' if need be.[108]

The notion of women taking up tasks which usually men performed, however, was not there in Gandhi's time. A column in the *Indian Ladies's Magazine* had the following observation :

'We do not want our women to become literary luminaries and scientific prodigies, so as to enable them to question the superiority of man, and claim equal rights with him, as the enlightened ladies do in England, by what is known as the "Women Suffragist Movement." It is enough if besides being loving and sweet-spoken as they are, they become helpful companions of their husbands in passing through life's wilderness. We have men enough and to spare for sterner works of toil and thought, and therefore we do not need that

105 *Rig Veda*, 10 : 85 : 46.
106 *Jatakas*, 4-3-16.
107 *Manusmriti*, 3 : 55-59.
108 *To the Women* (ed.) Anand T. Hingorani; 1941, p. 173.

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our finer sex should have to trouble their heads with complex problems for which they are naturally unfit.'[109]

In the same strain Gandhi said, 'In my opinion, it is degrading both for man and woman, that woman should be called upon or induced to forsake the hearth, and shoulder the rifle for the protection of that hearth. It is a reversion to barbarity and the beginning of the end.'[110] At another place he said 'Equality of the sexes does not mean equality of occupations.'[111]

Mahatma Gandhi's place in the history of the Indian national movement is unique. But for him it would not have attained the freshness and vitality it did. He transformed the Congress from a deliberative body to an agitational one, from one which begged for freedom to one which claimed it as a right, as Tilak did. He introduced methods in politics unheard of before. He made the national movement one of the masses not of classes ; and gave dignity to resistance. Unfortunately others could not share his idealism or have the courage to practise it. Without inner strength and the capacity for sacrifice, idealism remains a theoretical concept. The majority of men prized their life as the most precious possession. So, faced with *lathis* and bullets, they answered force with force. That was why Gandhi had to call off civil disobedience, often when the campaign was at its height. Nevertheless it was Gandhi who gave nationalism new dimensions and a positive direction. He was the father of the nation and the spiritual guide of its prominent leaders. In the anxious months following partition, Nehru used to pay a daily visit to Gandhi. About these visits Nehru's niece later wrote : 'It was as if going to see Bapu (father, as Gandhi was affectionately called) were the solution of his dilemma and his weariness, as if the presence of Bapu would in itself answer questions and heal wounds.'[112]

109 *Indian Ladies's Magazine*, vol. VIII, p. 150.

110 *To the Women*, Gandhi Series vol. II, (ed.) Anand Hingorani, 1941, p. 27.

111 *Ibid*, p. 175.

112 Michael Brecher, *Nehru, A Political Biography*, Oxford, 1959, p. 382, *op. cit.* (Sahgal, *op. cit.*, p. 213).

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Gandhi's most cherished desire, as he wrote in his autobiography, was to see god face to face and attain *moksha* (emancipation). Whether he could achieve it one can't say. But he died with the name of god on his lips. When the assassin's bullets killed him, the last words he said were, '*He* Rama' (Oh god). And that, says the *Ramayana* (which he considered 'the greatest book in all devotional literature'), is not given even to the greatest of sages :

> 'Life after life sages make many efforts,
> But when they die, "Rama" comes not to their lips.'[113]

113 *Kishikindha kanda*, 9 : 2 *Janma janma muni jatanu karahin.*
Anta Rama kahi ayat nahin.

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7

Independent India

'Respect for law and order and sanctity of life and property seem no longer to guide our conduct.... What we find today is the very antithesis of the noble spirit that animated the nation only a few decades ago. Why is it that this permissive attitude has overtaken our society in the short span? Have we of the older generation set a wrong example to the country by our life and conduct?'

President N.Sanjiva Reddy's broadcast on the Republic Day of India 26 January 1982

From 1947-1950

During the critical period from 1947 to 1950, the years between the attainment of independence and the adoption of the Indian constitution, two men ruled India—Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel. As we have seen, there were differences between them which were almost heading for a crisis. During his lifetime Gandhi has been successful in resolving their differences, and his death united them all the more. As Brecher says 'the men became reconciled as a mark of respect to the revered master'. Historians have commented on the diversity between Nehru and Patel. Indeed it is difficult to find two men alike, and it must be admitted that in the case of these two statesmen the only similarity was perhaps their greatness. Patel was clear

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troops firing across the border. This was prelude to a full-fledged attack by Pakistan, and the Kashmir valley became the scene of a bloody three week's war. India naturally attempted to destroy the bases from which the Pakistani attack on Kashmir was planned. In order to relieve pressure on the Chhamb sector she sent her forces in a drive towards Lahore and Sialkot. This was a military manoeuvre which any sensible general would plan but it seemed to disturb the British prime minister Harold Wilson who was concerned that 'Indian forces have today attacked Pakistan territory....[7]' 'No lasting solution of the Kashmir problem' he urged 'can possibly be reached by force...' Yet the prime minister was singularly quiet when, a few days after Pakistan launched an unprovoked attack on Indian territory. It was natural that the British should consider themselves a kind of god-father to Pakistan. After all they had put in almost half a century's effort in Pakistan's creation! Sometime before the US had also proposed that Kashmir should be maintained as an independent state and both Indian and Pakistan should guarantee its independence. Nehru rightly turned this down. Crocker observes about this : 'India's reaction... was, once more, that Kashmir is an integral part of India—rather as Portugal had said that Goa was an integral part of Portugal—that the union is irrevocable and so there is nothing to discuss.[8] The comparison is ridiculous, almost laughable. Crocker might as well have said that Calcutta is an integral part of England ! Kashmir was also discussed between Ayub Khan and Shastri at Tashkent later, but it was more an exchange of views rather than any purposeful discussion.

3. *India Stays in the Commonwealth*

Although Nehru had said more than once that anything less than complete independence would be unacceptable, he always distinguished between Britain as a ruling power and Britain as an equal. Addressing a meeting of the Indian Conciliation Group

7 Off Records, 5 February-2 March.

8 Walter Crocker, *Nehru, A Contemporary's Estimate*, Allen & Unwin, 1966, p. 95.

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in London on 4 February 1936 he had said 'Personally I can conceive and welcome the idea of a close association between India and England on terms other than those of imperialism.'[9] Mountbatten thought that there 'is room for a Republic within the Commonwealth'.[10] The matter was discussed by Nehru with Attlee in the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference in London on October 1948. Confiding his views to Brecher Nehru said in 1955 'membership in the Commonwealth means independence plus, not independence minus.' The Congress dominated constituent assembly carried through the proposal, and India opted to stay in the Commonwealth as a sovereign independent republic. It was decided that the British monarch would be designated as Head of the Commonwealth. In many ways the decision was advantageous. The bulk of India's trade was with the Commonwealth and it imported considerable quantity of British arms. It enabled India to assist the large number of Indian settlers in other Commonwealth countries like South Africa, Malaya, British Guiana and so forth. It stabilised India's relations with the outside world.[11] A view has been expressed that 'India got a good deal out of it (staying in the Commonwealth) while she was required to give little or nothing in return.'[12] That sounds very much as though it was some kind of business deal. Of courfe it was some kind of business deal. Of course it was not, but even if we consider it to be so, as Crocker would have it, it would be wrong to say that India gave nothing in return. When the British went, a number of Europeans stayed behind, and their interests were better served by India's remaining in the Commonwealth. Then there were the English missionaries who had taken firm roots in India. India was the biggest Asian country in the Commonwealth and certainly added to its prestige. It was also the greatest single country in the east which extensively used, and still uses, the English language. One could have understood a British historian

9 Brecher, 414, *op. cit.*
10 *Ibid*, 415 (Campbell-Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 290-1).
11 *Ibid.*
12 Brecher, 418.
13 W. Crocker, *Nehru, A Contemporary's Estimate*, Allen & Unwin, 1966, p. 112,

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saying that the benefit was mutual, but Crocker seems to strenuously stick on to the old imperialist viewpoint.

4. *Foreign Policy*

On 3 November 1948 Nehru addressed the UN General Assembly in Paris. He pleaded for 'the recognition of renascent Asia and the end of colonial and racial inequality.'[14] The appeal made a profund impression on the audience. Asking the Assembly to consider the economic aspect of the world problem too, he said :

'It is a strange thing, when the world lacks so many things, food and other necessities in many parts of the world, and people are dying from hunger that the attention of this Assembly of Nations is concentrated only on a number of political problems. There are economic problems also. I wonder if it would be possible for this Assembly to take a holiday for a while from some of the acute political problems which face it, and allow men's minds to settle down and look at the vital and urgent economic problems, and look at places in the world where food is lacking.'[15]

A year later, in October 1949, Nehru made his first visit to to the USA. He stopped in Cairo en route, to hold conferences with the Egyptian prime minister and King Farouk. US greeted him warmly, but there was also disappointment. India was in the throes of a famine, and Nehru wanted to obtain two million tons of wheat and monetary assistance to tide over the crisis. The Americans tried to exact concessions which he indignantly refused. The aid came, but after eighteen months when thousands had perished. Nehru was disillusioned by American materialism, and by their reluctance to give aid without strings. He also found some of the Americans boastful, as when in a dinner he attended, a prominent businessman, to impress him, said 'Mr Prime Minister, around this table are seated leaders

14 Brecher, 418.

15 Nehru, *The First Sixty Years*, (ed.) Dorothy Norman, vol. 2, Asia, 1965, p. 420.

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of corporations worth twenty billion dollars.'[16] It was characteristic of Nehru to avoid being critical of countries which hosted him, but his American visit forced from him the remark: 'You will not expect me to say that I admire everything that I find here in the United States. I don't. The United States has got reputation abroad...of being materialistic and of being tough in matters of money.... Americans are supposed to be very hardheaded businessmen.'[17] American leaders had their own grouse against Nehru inasmuch as he refused to 'stand up and be counted' (against international communism).

5. *India Gives Herself a Constitution.*

The Constitution of India which was formally inaugurated on 26 January 1950, exactly twenty years after the Congress 'declaration of independence' on the eve of civil disobedience, was a republican constitution drafted by Indians alone. It emerged after an effort which took about three years, the chief architect being Dr B.R. Ambedkar, Chairman of Drafting Committee, others being Sir Benegal Rau, Constitutional Adviser to Constituent Assembly, S.N. Mukerjee, Chief Draftsman and H.V.R. Iyenger, Secretary of the Assembly. The decisions incorporated in the constitution were taken by the Congress party caucus, and Nehru played the decisive part in framing the Objectives Resolution.

The Directives of the Constitution

The constitution is an exceptionally long document having 395 articles and 8 annexures. Various historians have emphasised that the constitution has borrowed ideas from the British, US and Australian models, and, apart from the fact that it has been drafted by Indians, there is little originality in it. Brecher says 'The constitution of India is a purely Western charter, a *mélange* of ideas and practices drawn from various constitutions

16 Brecher, 419.
17 *Nehru, The First Sixty Years*, (ed,) Dorothy Norman, vol. 2 Asia, 1965, p. 508.

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in Europe and America.'[18] Another writer says : 'The 1950 constitution itself had drawn heavily not only on Britain's North American Act of 1867 (for Canada) and the Commonwealth of Australia Act of 1900, but also from the Government of India Act of 1935, which the Congress leaders had once denounced as the "slave" constitution.... These provisions (incorporating fundamental rights), and the establishment of the Supreme Court with powers to interpret the constitution, and the election of the president of the republic, are about the only major points of difference that the Indian republican constitution has with the colonial Government of India Act passed by the British parliament in 1935.'[19] These observations are not wholly true. The 1935 Act was a clear attempt to wreck the federation by giving option to the states, which formed quite a large part of India, to stay in or to keep away. Even if they acceded it would be on varying terms. If the constitution makers took the innocuous parts of various constitutions and included them in their own, they cannot thereby be blamed for lack of orginality. A constitution is a legal document and is not something on which one can express any views. At the most it can be moulded to the type of people and country for which it is meant. Once having determined that India would be 'a sovereign democratic republic' features of a democracy had to be incorporated and there could not be much choice about it. Another criticism made is that the directive principles of the constitution 'have not really been put into practice.'[20] Hiro says 'None of these directives, it must be noted, is as yet within a shade of realisation.'[21] While it must be admitted that various factors, like the steep growth in population, illiteracy, poverty and corruption have made the progress in achievement of these directives seem rather slow, it would be an exaggeration to say there has been none at all. The directives briefly are—adequate

18 Brecher, 421.

19 Dilip Hiro, *Inside India Today*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976, pp. 45-6 (Referred to hereafter as 'Hiro').

20 Charles Bettelheim, *India Independent*, (trans. W.A. Caswell) Macgibbon & Kee, 1968, p. 107 (Referred hereafter as 'CB').

21 Hiro, 46.

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means of livelihood, equal distribution of wealth and other material resources, equal pay for equal work, prevention of exploitation of child labour, equal justice and free legal aid to the poor, organisation of village panchayats, securing the right to work and education, and giving assistance in sickness, unemployment, old age, disablement etc., humane conditions of work and maternity relief, a minimum wage for workers, workers's participation in industry, free and compulsory education to children up to 14 years age, protection to weaker sections of the people, raising levels of nutrition and public health, organising agriculture and animal husbandry, protection of forests and wild life, protection of monuments, separation of the executive from the judiciary, promotion of internal peace and security. The directives have been mentioned at some length because the tendency of some foreign writers is to list a few of them, which have not yet been realised and then to come to the kind of conclusion aforesaid. Many of these directives *have* been realised, and effort has been made towards the realisation of others. Panchayats have been organised. In 1950-51 there were 83,000 of them, and at the end of the second five-year plan, 200,000.[22] For equal pay for equal work a number of pay commissions have attempted to rationalise pay scales, and minimum wages for workers have been fixed.[23] In some states arrangement has been made to provide free legal aid to those who need it and members of the bar associations have volunteered for it. Employment exchanges have been established to help people who seek employment. Technical graduates are given a certain amount of unemployed allowance and factories and establishments are required to employ a prescribed number of apprentices. Other directives like separation of the executive and the judiciary (by giving case work entirely to magistrates under High Courts), free compulsory

22 CB, 124-5.

23 The Minimum Wages Act 1948 empowers governments to fix such wages in specified employments. Wages under the act have been fixed and revised from time to time (*India 1980*, Publications Division, Government of India, p. 389).

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education,[24] worker's participation in industry,[25] protection of forests,[26] wild life[27] and ancient monuments,[28] development of agriculture and animal husbandry, institutions for the disabled with government assistance[29] and protection of the weaker sections (the backward and scheduled castes and tribals),[30] have to a great extent been achieved. Thus it would be wrong to say that nothing has been done about enforcing the directives. It is quite another matter how these institutions are working, and in this too it would be irrational to draw hasty conclusions. For example the writer aforesaid, Dilip Hiro, has concluded from the figures of the annual budget of just *one* panchayat that panchayats are running at a loss.[31] Maybe some are, but there are others which are also working well. Such a kind of conclusion would be justified only from a sample study of large segments, though it may be true that the scope of panchayats to raise funds is very little.

The Objectives

The object of the constitution is stated to ensure that all citizens enjoy justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. These principles are elaborated in articles 15 to 31 which define fundamental rights. There are notable restrictions, as for example article 19 provides for freedom of speech and expression, but the state might make laws restricting such rights under certain circumstances viz. in the matter of sovereignty and integrity of

24 Education in classes I-V is free in govt. schools run by local bodies throughout the country. It is also free for classes VI-VIII in most states. All states (with very few exceptions) have enacted legislation for compulsory education (*India 1980*, Publications Division, Government of India, p. 49).

25 *See India 1980*, Publications Division, pp. 387-8.

26 *Ibid*, p. 231 (Central Board of Forestry's recommendation).

27 This has been done by the Wild Life Protection Act 1972 adopted by most states.

28 *India 1980*, p. 70 (Archaelogy).

29 See *India 1980*, p. 121 (Deaf, Orthopaedically Handicapped, Mentally Retarded).

30 *India 1980*, pp. 122-132.

31 Hiro, 50.

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India, the security of the state, friendly relation with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence (article 19:2). Articles 32 to 35 lay down constitutional remedies. Directive principles are incorporated in articles 36 to 51.

The Central Executive

The central executive power is vested in the president and a prime minister and his cabinet. The head of the central executive is the president holding all the executive powers, with a five years term, elected by an electoral college including members of the parliament and the state legislative assemblies chosen on a system of proportional representation, each vote having a value proportional to the population of that state which the voter represents. In theory the powers of the president are vast. He makes all important nominations, promulgates laws passed by parliament and adresses the two chambers. In practice, however, except in a state of emergency it is the prime minister who is all powerful. The prime minister is formally nominated by the president. All ministers too are nominated by him on the prime minister's advice, and are collectively responible to the Lok Sabha (house of the people). A minister who is not a member of one of the two houses beyond six months has to surrender his portfolio. The constitution provides for a vice-president, elected in the same manner as the president. He is normally president of the council of states (Rajya Sabha) also.

The Central Legislature

The central parliament has two houses, the council of states and the house of the people. The council of states has up to 250 members, 12 nominated by the president and the others elected by the state legislative assemblies according to a system of proportional representation The council cannot be dissolved and can be changed only one-third at a time. The house of the people, having 545 members is elected directly by adult

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suffrage. Its term is five years, unless it is earlier dissolved by the president. The business is conducted by a speaker or a deputy speaker, each being elected, and decisions are reached by a majority vote, at least one tenth of the members being present.

The Supreme Court

The Union judiciary is the Supreme Court of India consisting of a chief justice and thirteen judges (initially seven). The Supreme Court functions as a court of original jurisdiction in disputes between the government of India and a state, or between one state and another. It hears appeals from High Courts in cases involving substantial questions of law as to the interpretation of the constitution in any civil, criminal or other proceeding, provided the High Court gives leave of appeal. Judges of the Supreme Court can hold office till they reach 65 years age and cannot be removed except for proved misbehaviour or incapacity, and that too on the vote of at least two-third of the members of each house of parliament.

The Government in the States

The first schedule of the constitution mentions the states and the territories included in them. The States Reorganisation Committee brought the statutes of each state in line, did away with the old princely states, and made state boundaries coincide with linguistic frontiers. There are 22 states and 9 union territories.[32] The union territories are under the direct authority of the central government.

In each state the executive power is with the governor, who

32 The states or provinces are—Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir, Nagaland, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya and Sikkim. The Union territories—The Andaman and Nicobar, Islands Lakshadweep, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Goa Daman and Diu, Pondicherry, Chandigarh, Mizoram, and Arunachal Pradesh.

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is appointed by the president and holds office at his pleasure. He administers the state with the aid and advice of a council of ministers presided over by the chief minister. On the analogy of the centre, the main power in the states is in the hands of the chief minister and his cabinet colleagues, although decisions are issued in the governor's name. The ministers are collectively responsible to the state legislative assemblies.

The state legislature consists of the governor and one or two chambers, depending on the state concerned. Where there are two houses, one is known as the legislative council and the other as the legislative assembly.[33] If there is only one house it is called the legislative assembly. The assemblies have between 60 to 500 members, one member at the most for every 75,000 people. The number of members in the council of a state does not exceed one-third of the strength of the state's assembly, subject to a minimum of forty. Members of the state assemblies are elected by universal suffrage while of those in the councils most are elected by a limited section of the community, others being nominated without election. The assembly has normally a six years term while the council is a permanent body one-third of the members retiring every second year. In case of dispute between the two houses the view of the legislative assembly prevails. The governor must promulgate legislation once passed by the assemblies, unless he submits the proposal to the president of the republic. If the president withholds assent the proposal is returned to the state legislature and put to vote again. The Governor may promulgate ordinances when the assemblies are not in session. If and when he feels that the administration of the state cannot be carried on under the normal constitutional provisions, he may make a recommendation to the president for the centre to take over.

The Relations Between the Union and the States

The constitution determines the respective fields of legislation

33 There are two houses of legislature in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh, and in the remaining states one house.

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of the centre and of the states and the subjects (concurrent list) shared by the two. The three lists—union, state and concurrent—are specified in the seventh schedule (article 246). The The central legislation is particularly great in economic and financial matters, and includes defence, atomic energy, foreign affairs, Reserve Bank of India, currency and coinage, central finances, banking and insurance, customs duties, company taxes, and other taxes except agricultural income. The concurrent lists includes civil rights, penal code and legal matters, trade and industry, economic and social planning, labour and price control, factories, education and labour. The states retain exclusively subjects like law and order, local government, agriculture and fisheries, forests, public health and sanitation and communications not specified in the union list. Although the states's exclusive powers are limited they cover many important spheres, and therefore the possibility of the centre having things done against their wishes in essential matters is remote. This is all the more so as generally (although there have been exceptions too) the same party is ascendant in the states as in the centre. When this is not so there are clashes, and these are particularly on financial issues, because, as we shall see, the main hold of the central government over the states is in finance.

The central government controls the policies of the states by means of its financial influence. States cannot raise a public loan to pay their debts without the consent of the central government. Their financial means being limited, they have to heavily rely on the central government. The incidence of taxation in the states is already high in the urban sector, and rural taxation is a tricky business for it creates discontent among a large section of people on whom politicians have to rely for votes. The tendency therefore is for more and more demands for central aid as the table on next two pages will show.

The total amount of resources thus, which were transferred to the states during the second plan period, was more than double that transferred during the first plan period. It was

34 *India, 1980* Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, September 1980, p. 171.

35(a) *India 1980*, Publications Division, p. 180 (Table 12.2).

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Resources Transferred to States*

Crores of Ruppes

Period	*1* Taxes & Duties	*2* Grants	*3* Loans*	*4* Total	*5* Aggregate expenditure of state govts.	*6* (4) as percentage of (5)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
First Plan	352.5	214.8	637.9	1,205.2	3,351.9	36.0
Second Plan	710.1	700.4	1037.9	2,440.4	5,845.9	41.7
Third Plan	1,196.0	1302.9	2115.2	4,650.4	10,719.5	43.4
1966-67	372.6	413.1	638.5	1,424.2	3,063.9	46.5
1967-68	415.7	429.0	492.5	1,387.2	3,221.0	43.1
1968-69	491.0	507.2	321.8	1,320.0	3,627.3	36.4
1969-70	621.3	531.2	398.2	1,550.7	4,039.1	38.4
1970-71	755.3	576.0	350.5	1,681.8	4,469.1	37.6
1971-72	941.9	875.9	366.2	2,184.0	5,305.7	41.2
1972-73	1,066.6	926.4	851.2	2,884.2	6,475.8	43.9

(Continued on next page)

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1973-74	1,162.4	937.2	619.0	2,718.6	7,259.5	37.4
Forth Plan Period	4,547.5	3846.7	2585.1	10,979.3	27,549.2	39.9
1974-75	1,228.5	1021.6	569.8	2,819.9	8,004.2	35.2
1975-76	1,599.1	1218 5	532.6	3,350.2	9,662.6	34.7
1976-77	1,679.8	1505.2	726.9	3,911.9	11,016.8	35.5
1977-78 (RE)	1,820.1	1880.4	1183.5	4,884.0	12,677.2	38.5
1978-79 (BE)	2,017.7	2269.7	1505.1	5,792.5	14,145.3	40.9

* Net of requirements. RE=Revised Estimates. BE=Budget Estimates

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nearly double again during the third plan and more than double in the fourth plan. The central government can ill afford this heavy financing of states. Its own budget position is none too good. In 1978-79, for example, there were deficits of 145.7 crore in revenue account, and 1,391.5 crore in capital accounts, making an overall deficit of 1,537.2 crore.[35(b)]

The State of Emergency

According to the constitution, if the president thinks that security of the country is in danger, a proclamation of emergency may be issued by him. This has to be laid before both houses and expires after two months if it has not been approved by them. Presidential decisions become paramount in the state during the emergency and legislation is controlled by the central government. If the president decides on the report of the governor of a state that its adminstration has broken down he may issue a proclamation under article 356 of the constitution. This cannot in any case be prolonged beyond three years, and results in the powers of the state legislatures being transferred to the central government.

Amendment of the Constitution

The constitution may be modified by a law adopted by a majority in each house, at least two-third of the voters present voting for the amendment. If the modification concerns presidential elections, the executive powers of the union and of the states, the relations between the two, provisions regarding High Courts or the Supreme Court, and so forth, ratification by at least half of the legislatures is neeessary.

A number of amendments have been made, the most controversial ones being the twenty-fourth and the twenty-fifth which were introduced in the Lok Sabha in July 1971 and have become law. The twenty-fourth amendment declares that parliament has constituent powers and that article 368 (the one relating to the procedure to amend) itself confers on it a

35(b) *India 1980*, Publications Division, p. 180 (Table 12.2).

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substantive power to modify the cons itution. The scope of 'amendment' was enlarged to mean alteration, addition and repeal. The discretion of the president in the matter of giving his assent was done away with. It was also provided that 'amendment' was not within the meaning of article 13 of the constitution (which forbids the making of laws that take awav or abridge fundamental rights). The twenty-fifth amendment was about acquisition and requisition of property. The main changes made in this were that the concept of 'compensation' was done away with and instead the word 'amount' substituted. The power of judicial review was taken away and legislatures were put under the control of the central executive regarding this particular matter. Further the legislature's interpretation of public purpose was made non-justicable. It was natural that these amendments should raise a storm of protest, for they hit at the fundamental rights which the constitution makers had considered to be the most precious of all, and they enabled government to acquire any property, however valuable, for a paltry amount which the owner would havc to accept because the courts could not intervene.

Creation of the Services and Other Matters

Part XIV of the constitution relates to services under the union and the states, and part XIV A to the establishment of tribunals. The all-India Services including the Indian Admistrative Service, the Indian Police Service and the all-India Judicial Service are constituted under chapter 1 of part XIV while chapter 2 provides for union and states public service commissions. Tribunals established by part XIV A are for the disposal of disputes, complaints, grievance relating to service conditions and service matters, and so forth. Part XVI is about reservations in respect of the scheduled castes scheduled tribes and other minorities in the legislatures, services and posts, and provides for their welfare. Part XVII prescribes the official language as Hindi in Devanagari script, but authorises the continued use of English for a period of fifteen years 'for all official purposes of the Union for which it was being used before the commencement of the constitution.'

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After the expiry of this period parliament could decide whether to switch on completely to Hindi or to continue the use of English and a commission was to be appointed after five years to go into this matter. The administrative pattern and the extent to which it seems to have proved useful will be taken up later. Here it would suffice to say that it was approximately the same as that inherited from the British, except for the emphasis on village administration through panchayats and its allied institutions.

1950 Onwards

By march 1950 refugees from East Bengal (which now formed part of Pakistan) had begun to pour in at an enormous rate, creating a problem for the Indian government. Patel advocated a tough line. He wanted the expulsion of ten Muslims for every Hindu driven out from East Pakistan. Nehru, with his secular outlook, disagreed. Another point of disagreement between the two leaders rose on the move by Nehru to revolutionise the Hindu Code Bill. The dissension between Nehru and Patel led to division in the Congress ranks too. Patel's candidate, Purshottamdas Tandon, held the field for sometime, though with a very slender majority. Nehru's choice was Acharya J.B. Kripalani. With Patel's death on 15 December 1950, Nehru became the undisputed leader of the Congress. On 9 September 1951 Tandon resigned from the Congress presidentship and Nehru took over. He remained the Congress president till 1954 when he chose U.N. Dhebar as his successor. A number of new parties arose in this period. A brief account of these will be given later. In the 1951-52 elections the Congress won an overwhelming majority of seats in the parliament (362 out of 498) and a working majority in all states except Madras, Orissa, PEPSU (Patiala and East Punjab States Union) and Travancore Cochin. In these four it emerged as the largest single party. In Tripura the Communists got a hold. The voting pattern, however, was such that the Congress had only 45 per cent of the total votes cast in the centre and 42 per cent in the states. Only in Saurashtra did it get an absolute majority of votes. But the percentage

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of votes cast was 60 (105,000,000 persons voting) which showed that political consciousness was at a high level. Nehru was continuously prime minister for seventeen years (1947-1964). He fought three general elections during this period and in all of them his party emerged victorious. This by itself is no mean achievement, and when we consider the triumphs of his administration, particulary the five year plans which took India along the road to progress, we can appreciate the greatness of what he was able to accomplish. Before we go on to consider these achievements, an account of the new political parties with which the Congress had henceforth to contend, would not be out of place.

Political Parties

1. *Swatantra*

The Swatantra party originated in 1959, the formal decision to establish it being made public in Madras on 4 June 1959. The party was formally inaugurated in the beginning of August 1959 at a preparatory convention in Bombay under the leadership of C. Rajagopalachari, its chief spokesman, who said : 'I think we are inaugurating a movement of freedom.' M.R. Masani was its general secretary. The party was against state control and favoured private enterprise. There was an increasing dominance of the public sector in the plan investment during the second five year plan, and an emphasis on the 'socialistic pattern of society.' The Swatantra party opposed these ideas. It expressed itself against too much officialdom, bureaucratic management of the rural economy, political pressure on officials, official directives on education, controls, and abnormal deficit financing. Further the party was against dependence on foreign exchange, ceiling on land holdings, state trading in foodgrains, co-operative farming societies, and the measures introduced by the government consequent to the Chinese invasion of 1962, viz. rise in taxation, compulsory savings scheme, gold control and so forth. The spokesmen of the Swatantra party believed that 'the business of the state is not business but government,' and 'that government is best which governs least.'

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The convention adopted the statement of policy called 'To prosperity through freedom.' It also adopted the party's flag and constitution. The principles of the party were embodied in twenty-one short articles. Some of these were : equality for all without distinction of religion, caste, occupation or political affiliations; the fostering of individual enterprise; the right to own property, and just compensation if it was acquired; full play of the powers of judicial review given to courts by the constitution; small scale village industries; workers's right to control their own unions, to be associated in management of industry and to resort to strikes. In foreign policy the party was against non-alignment and neutrality. It wanted India to enter into advantageous alliance with its neighbours such as South Asia, Pakistan and so forth and if necessary with the free nations of the world. It condemned aggression on Indian territory, but was for friendly relations with Pakistan.

Amongst the specific steps suggested by the Swatantra party were the following : The creation of an Ombudsman to hear complaints against public servants; a non-political Board along the lines of the election commission to give permits and licenses; termination of the emergency declared after the Chinese invasion and discrimination in the use of preventive detention laws ; and a voluntary relinquishment of office by the ruling power six months before the elections in order to ensure its fairness.

The performance of the Swatantra party in 1962 was poor as compared to the Congress, but seeing that it was then only a three years old organisation it compared favourably to many others, as the following table for the Lok Sabha elections will show :

Total No. of Seats	CON	CPI	SWA	PSS	JS	RPI	SP	HM	RRP
491*	485	137	173	168	196	68	107	38	41
	358	29	18	12	14	3	6	1	2

36 Harold L. Erdman, *The Swatantra Party and Indian Conservatism*, Cambridge, 1967, p. 190.

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* (Independents, minor and unrecognised parties have been excluded from the statement. The numerator shows the number of seats contested and the denominator the number returned).

In the state legislative assemblies the Swatantra party contested 1,038 out of 2,855 seats in 12 of the major states.[37] It got 166 seats and lost 872. As regards the percentage of votes obtained, the party ranked second only to the Congress and the CPI in the Lok Sabha election, as the following table will show :

CON	CPI	SWA	PSP	JS	RPI	SP	HM	RRP
44.72	9.94	7.89	6.81	6.44	2.83	2.69	0.65	0.60

(Figures show percentage of votes obtained. Minor parties, those unrecognised, and independents, are not shown)

In the eleven mojor states[38] the percentage of votes obtained by Swatantra varied between 0.44 in Maharashtra to 24.24 in Gujarat, the break-up being under 5 per cent in 5 states, 5 to 10 per cent in two states, and 10 to 25 per cent in 4.

2. *Jana Sangh*

'The Bhartiya Jana Sangh' says a British Foreign Service Officer 'enjoys a unique position among the national political parties of India. It is the only party that has increased its percentage of the popular vote and its share of parliamentary and assembly seats in each successive election, from 1952 through 1967.'[39] The origin of the Jana Sangh can be traced to the early years after partition. One of the consequences of partition was the tragic exodus of Hindus from East Bengal.

37 Andhra Pradesh Assam, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Madras, Maharashtra, Mysore, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

38 Swatantra did not contest any seat in Assam. Other states are as in the previous footnote.

39 Craig Baxter, *The Jana Sangh*, University of Pennsylvania Press, p. 1.

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By the middle of January 1950 this reached enormous proportions. It was so bad that prime minister Nehru observed in parliament on 23 February 1950, 'Many parts of East Bengal had witnessed tragedy on a considerable scale. A very large number, if not all, of the members of the minority community of Pakistan had lost all sense of security and lived in fear and apprehension.'[40] The Nehru-Liaquat Ali pact of 8 April proved a one sided affair, for while India acted on it. Pakistan did not. So the trickle of Hindu refugees continued. The finance minister Dr John Mathai, K.C. Neogy and Dr Shyamaprasad Mookerjee the industries and supply minister resigned on this issue. They believed Liaquat Ali had agreed to the pact only to impress USA where he was soon to go, and India had played into his hands. Dr Mookerjee, who later became the founder and president of the Jana Sangh, proposed three remedies —the annulment of partition, demanding one-third of East Bengal from Pakistan for settling the refugees they were turning out, and thirdly an exchange of population and property apart from compensation. Two new parties were formed between the period of the exodus from East Bengal and the elections of 1952—KMPP (Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party) by Acharya Kripalani, and the Jana Sangh by Dr Shyamaprasad Mookerjee. The Jana Sangh was founded as an all-India party on 21 October 1951. Deendayal Upadhyaya, the party's general secretary said that the Jana Sangh wished to revive the Bhartiya life and ideals 'which had been ignored and neglected by the Congress in their anxiety to make Bharat a carbon copy of the west.'[41]

Shortly after its inception, Dr Mookerjee the Jana Sangh president and party head, started talks with the prominent leaders of the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) which had grown up under the guidance of Madhavarao Sadashiva Golwalkar popularly known as 'Guruji'. The RSS had been hurriedly banned immediately after Mahatma Gandhi's assassination. But the ban had been lifted by the government in July 1949 after it was shown that the RSS had no hand in it. The RSS's

40 The *Times of India*, 24 February 1950.
41 *United Asia*, January 1962 p. 28 (The Jana Sangh Perspective).

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main object was 'the cultural and physical strengthening of Hindus.'[42] When the government insisted that the RSS should reduce its constitution to writing, the Sangh put as its aims 'to weld together the diverse groups within the Hindu *samaj* and to revitalise and rejuvenate the same on the basis of its *dharma* and *sanskriti*, that it may achieve an all-sided development of Bharatvarsha.'[43] The Sangh had no politics, but their members were allowed to join any political party except those which believed in or resorted to violent means in order to achieve their ends. This permissive clause led to some of the prominent RSS men joining hands with Dr Mookerjee and founding a new party which came to be known as the Bhartiya Jana Sangh. This party was officially created at a convention held in New Delhi on 21 October 1951, with Dr Mookerjee as president. The activities of the RSS, however, continued under the leadership of Golwalkar. As has been aptly remarked, the new BJS was the 'combination of a partyless leader, Shayamaprasad Mookerjee, and a leaderless party, the RSS.'[44]

Balraj Madhok an RSS leader contributed many articles to the *Organiser* which spelled out the BJS creed. The editor of this paper was Keval Malkani 'Kamal'. The 'Programme for a New Political Party,' written by 'Kamal' and having an introduction by Mookerjee, observed 'If democracy has to live, parties must exist. Otherwise democracy may well degenerate first into a one-party rule and then into a one-man rule.'[45] The new party discarded foreign values, attitudes and manner. Communism, it believed, could be opposed only by Hindus through 'Hindutva'. Only national i.e. Bhartiya principles could make Hindustan great. The word 'Hindu' or 'Hindutva' was not used in any communal or sectarian sense as is usually supposed. Defining a Hindu, V.D. Savarkar wrote 'A Hindu means a [person who regards this land of Bharatvarsha [from the Indus to the seas

42 Baxter, *The Jana Sangh*, Pennsylvania, 1969, p. 45. (Hereafter referred to as 'Baxter').

43 The *Organiser*, 6 September 1949.

44 Baxter, 54.

45 *Ibid*, 59-60, *op. cit.* (Malkani, *Principles for a New Political Party*). Delhi, Vijay Pustak Bhandar, 1951 Introduction, p. ii).

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Civil Disobedience : A Police Officer snatches a flag from a woman demonstrator

Famine in Calcutta. The Viceroy, Lord Wavell, visits a food kitchen

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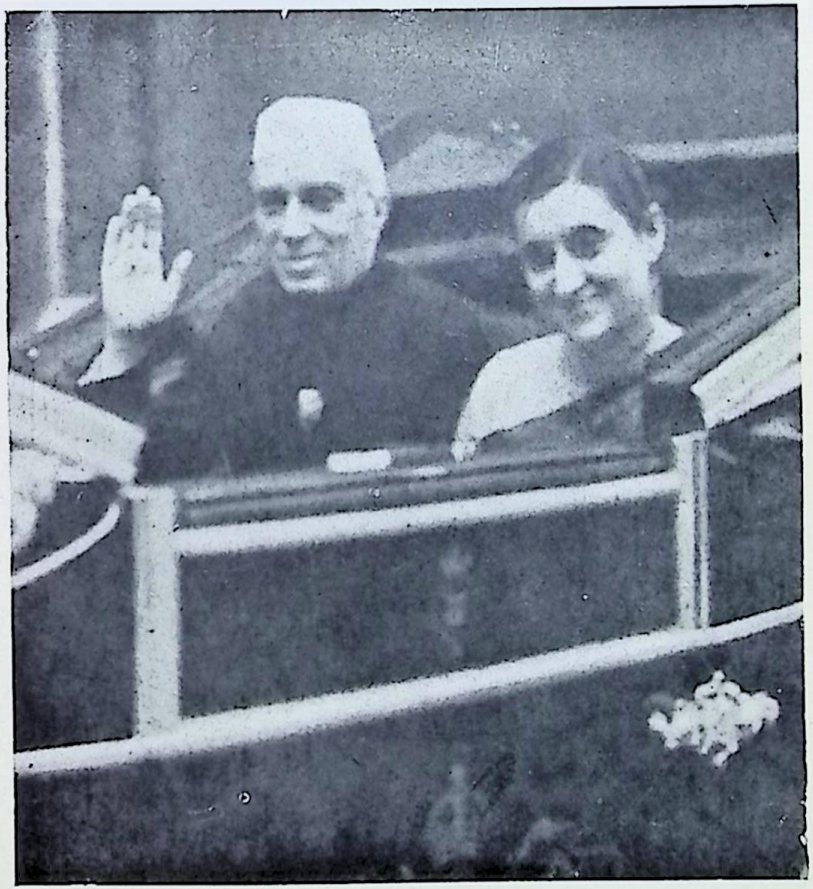
Arrival of Lord Mountbatten

The Tragedy of Partition : Hindu refugees in New Delhi

Sir Stafford Cripps



Jawaharlal Nehru and his daughter

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The Commonwealth Prime Ministers in London, 1957

Lord Willingdon unveils the statue to his predecessor Lord Irwin, 1934

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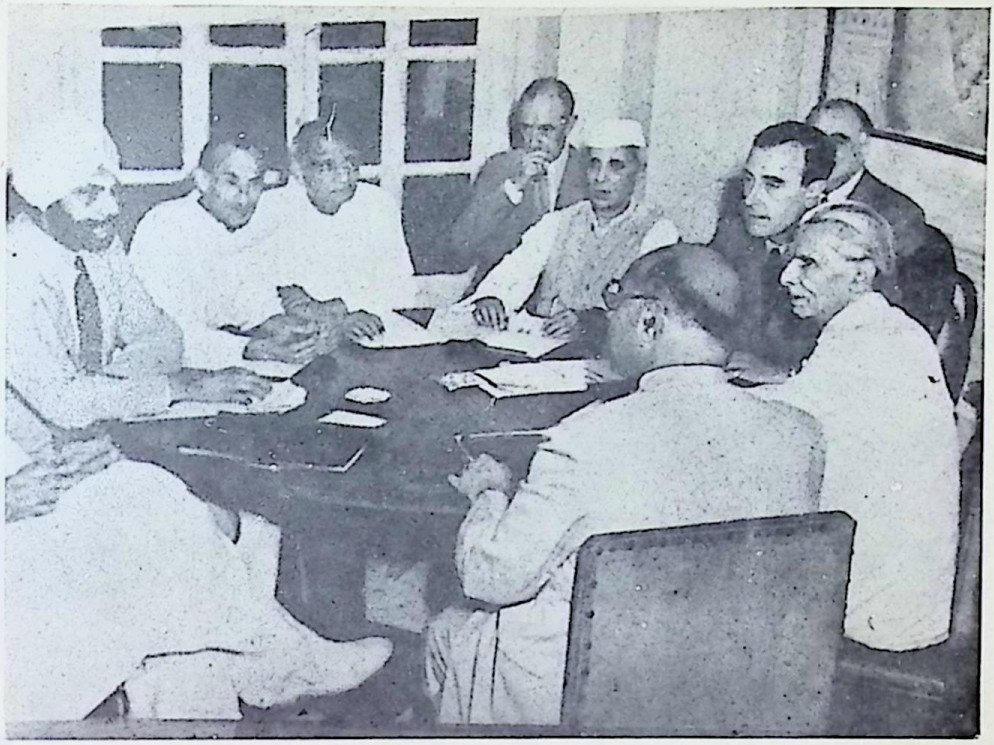
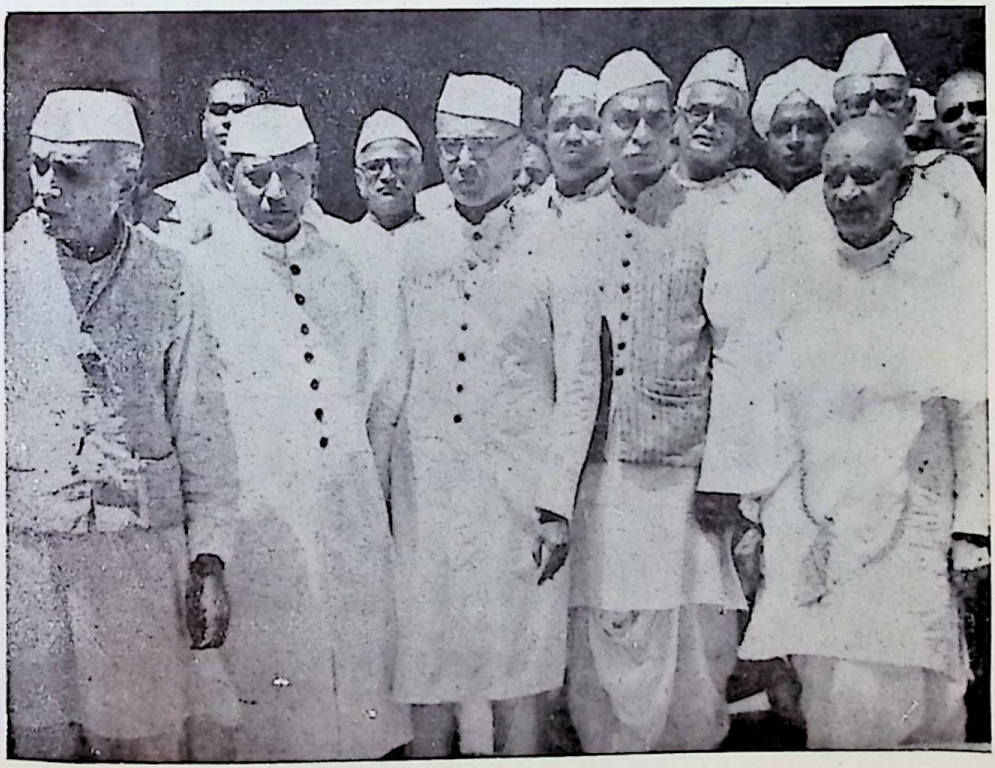


One of Lord Mounbatten's Consultations with Indian Leaders



First Indian Interim Governmen

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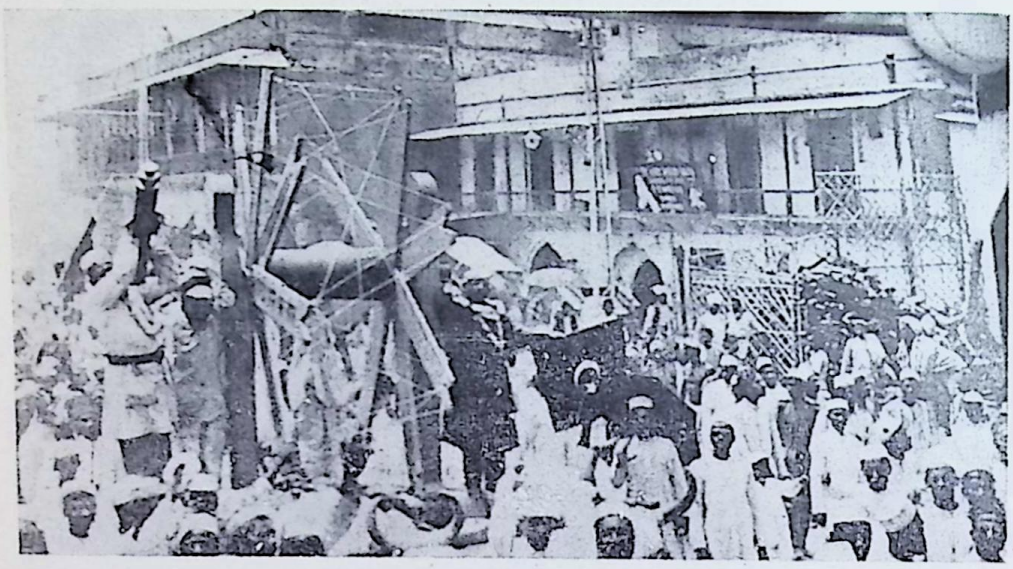
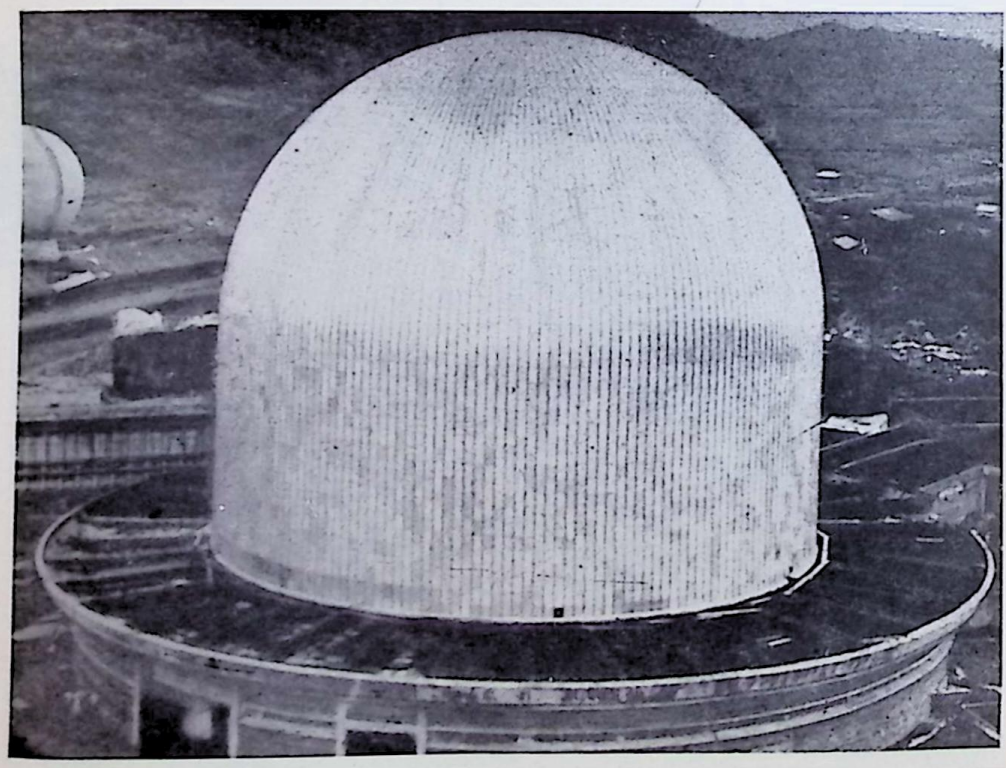


Charkha Demonstration



Atomic Energy in India

Mahatma Gandhi with the Aga Khan and his wife

Gandhi Goes to Attend the Round Table Conference

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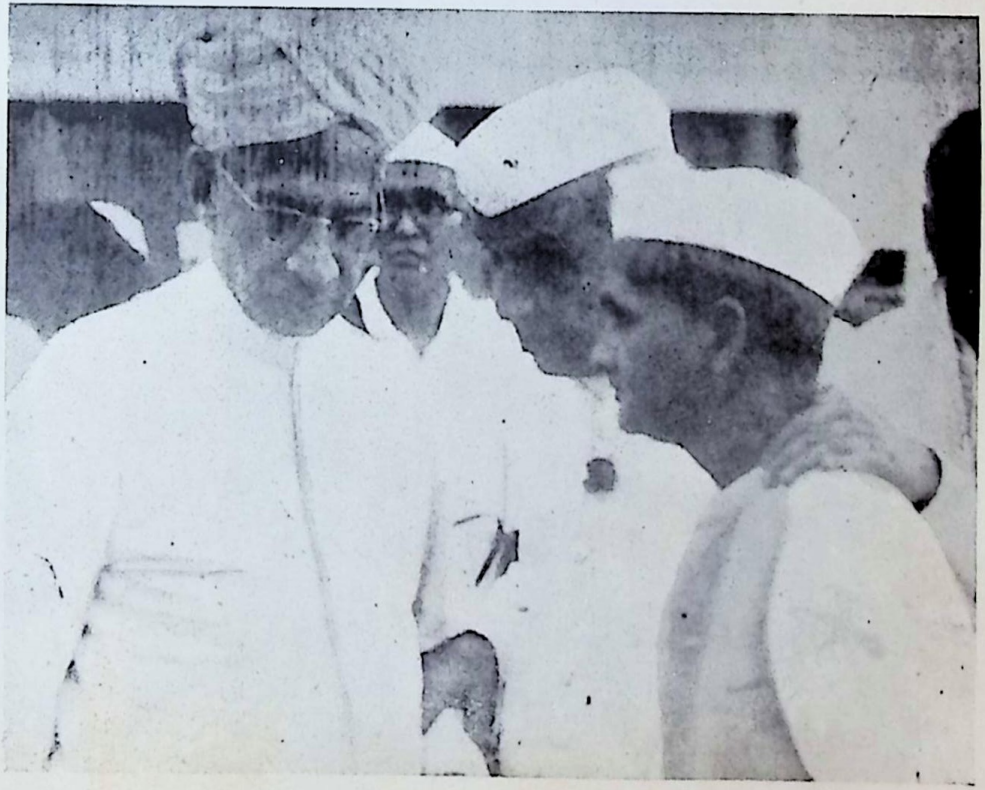
The March to Dandi : Gandhi and Sarojini Naidu



Dr. S. Radhakrishnan , Nehru and Shastri

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as his fatherland as well as his holy land.'[46] Thus patriotism and not religion was the requirement of being a Jana Sanghi. About the Muslims the *Organiser* wrote: 'the Jana Sangh considers them flesh of our flesh, the blood of our blood...They are welcome to *worship* their Islamic way. They are expected to *live* the Bhartiya way.'[47] Of course the conditions imposed, viz. use of Bhartiya names and the giving up of 'foreign' Urdu, the Arabic script, purdah and circumcision, as Madhok made clear; hardlv left the Muslims any chance of staying in the party, though it was claimed some of them did.

In industry Jana Sangh favoured decentralisation 'because concentration in big cities is a menace to human health.' It wanted wide ownership of share capital. Farmers were encouraged to invest in industry. Foreign capital was not opposed, so long as it did not have any political or military strings attached. Strikes and lockouts were not favoured. Instead of them the Jana Sangh advocated conciliation courts. Wages it believed should be tied to increases in productivity. In foreign policy, Malkani wanted a permanent seat for India on the Security Council and closer relations with S.E. Asia. He believed that Bharat was one, and could not be made two. Until reunification took place, Pakistan must be answerable for the property and lives of Hindus in East Bengal. If it did not treat the Hindus there fairly India should withhold water and electric power to bring Pakistan to its senses.

Mookerjee announced the formation of the 'People's Party' in Calcutta on 5 May 1951, with an eight point programme:

1. A united Bharat.
2. Reciprocity instead of achievement.
3. An independent foreign policy 'consistent with Bharat's paramount self-interest'.
4. Rehabilitation of refugees with suitable compensation from Pakistan.
5. Increased production of goods, especially food and cloth, and decentralisation of industry.

46 V.D. Savarkar, *Htndutva* (Poona, V.G. Kelkar, 1942) p. 1.
47 'Free Thinker' in The *Organiser*, v : 20, 31 December 1951,

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6. Development of a single Bharatiya culture.
7. Equal rights for all citizens, regardless of caste, community or creed, and improving the standards of backward classes.
8. Readjustment of the boundaries of West Bengal and Bihar.

The Jana Sangh contested the elections of 1952, 1957, 1962, 1967, 1971, 1977 and 1980, and despite the drawback of often being denounced for being communal and sectarian, particularly by the Congress, it managed to make a steady gain in its popularity, as the following statement for the Lok Sabha elections 1952-1967 will show.[48]

Year of Election	*Total Seats*	*Seats Contested*	*Seats Won*	*Percentage*
1952	489	92	3	3.06
1957	494	130	4	5.93
1962	494	195	14	6.44
1967	520	250	35	9.41

In the state assemblies too it made progress particularly in the states of Haryana, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, as the table on the next page shows.[49]

The Congress Party

After Patel's death, friction between the two groups in the Congress, the one led by P.D. Tandon and the other influenced by Nehru, came to a head. However shortly before the 1951-52 elections Tandon resigned, and the Congress secured a thumping victory winning 364 out of 498 parliamentary seats and 2,246

48 Baxter, Appendices.
49 *Ibid.*

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Table showing Jana Sangh seats captured in State Assemblies

STATE	*1952*				*1957*				*1962*				*1967*			
	S	*C*	*W*	*P*	*S*	*C*	*W*	*P*	*S*	*C*	*W*	*P*	*S*	*C*	*W*	*P*
Bihar	318	44	0	1.15	318	29	0	1.19	318	75	3	2.77	318	270	26	10.42
Haryana	60	23	2	6.21	55	24	4	12.02	54	34	4	13.43	81	48	12	14.39
Madhya Pradesh	339	126	6	5.66	288	127	10	9.88	288	195	41	16.66	296	265	78	28.28
Rajasthan	189	65	11	6.34	176	47	6	5.42	176	94	15	9.15	184	63	22	11.69
Uttar Pradesh	430	210	2	6.44	430	235	17	9.77	430	377	49	16.46	425	401	98	21.67

S=Total number of seats
C=No. of seats contested
W=Number of seats won
P=Percentage

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of 3,283 state assembly seats. In January 1955 the Congress at its Avadi (Madras) session adopted the resolution that 'planning should take place with a view to the establishment of a socialistic pattern of society where the principal means of production are under social ownership or control, production is progressively speeded up, and there is suitable distribution of national wealth.' The new slogan of 'socialistic pattern of society' which was thoroughly exploited in the general elections of 1957, yielded good dividends. Congress won 371 out of 494 seats in parliament and 2,012 out of 3,102 in the state assemblies. In Kerala, however, the Communists won by a narrow majority. With Nehru's death in 1964, and Shastri's coming in as prime minister, the socialistic idea went into the background. But with Shastri' death soon after, and the entry of Indira Gandhi as prime minister, it revived. In the 1967 elections the strength of the Congress in parliament declined (from 371 to 281) and it lost control in the assemblies of nine major states. To revitalise the Congress policy the High Command announced a ten-point programme in May 1967 : (1) social control of banks (2) nationalisation of general insurance (3) progressive take-over of export-import trade by state agencies (4) a national policy of public distribution of foodgrains (5) organisation of consumer co-operatives in urban and rural areas (6) effective steps to curb monopolies and concentration of economic power (7) steps to ensure provision of minimum needs of the entire community (8) restrictions on individual holdings of urban land (9) prompt implementation of land reforms, and (10) abolition of the princes's privileges 'other than privy purses.' Later, the qualification 'other than privy purses' was dropped. Within two years of the general election, a fresh poll was held in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and West Bengal. The Congress position worsened except in West Bengal. Indira Gandhi wanted to 'take the wind out of the sails of the Communists' by moving towards the left, but her other colleagues, Morarji Desai, S.K. Patil, Atulya Ghosh and S. Nijalangappa wanted a shift to the right and alliance with Jana Sangh and Swatantra parties. In April 1969 Mrs Gandhi advocated encouragement of the public sector by nationalisation of import of raw materials, curbing of restricted

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trade practices and enforcement of the land reform already existing. Meanwhile the death of President Zakir Hussain in May 1969 led to differences in opinion regarding his successor. Indira Gandhi favoured Jagjivan Ram and later V.V. Giri, while the Congress parliamentary board was for Sanjiva Reddy. After the Bangalore session Mrs Gandhi nationalised the top fourteen banks becoming 'the people's heroine who, they believed, wanted to do good to the people and curb the proprietary classes.'[50] Many of those in the Congress who were on the other side joined her, and she was able to get her candidate V.V. Giri elected president of India. The opposition group formed what was known as the 'Syndicate Congress.'[51]

Two objectives of Indira Gandhi's ten point programme, namely ceiling on urban property and abolition of the privileges of former rulers, were now to be achieved. The latter would need amendment in the constitution, which was carried through. The princes went to the Supreme Court which ruled that the order abolishing their privileges was *ultra vires*. But by taking the step Mrs Gandhi had won popular support. In order to increase her strength she got the Lok Sabha dissolved a year earlier, and in the mid-term poll raised the strength of her party to 351, reducing that of the Syndicate Congress from 61 to 16. The main slogan of the Congress now was *garibi hatao* (remove poverty). Mrs Gandhi's skilful handling of the Bangla Desh crisis and the military success against Pakistan, raised the Congress prestige even higher. Soon, however, there was a turn in the tide. With inthree years Jayaprakash Narayan had raised the standard of revolt with a mammoth procession in Delhi. There were several reasons for this. Food shortages, and resulting food riots, rise in the cost of gasolene and kerosene due to drastic cut in the Arab oil supply, rising prices labour unrest and strikes, were some of the causes of discontent and public dissatisfaction. Some of the Congress leaders tried to cover these up in the cloak of adulation. They started likening Indira

50 *Hindustan Standard* 1 March 1971. Quoted in Dilip Hiro, *Inside India Today* Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976, p. 77.

51 The Syndicate Congress began to be popularly called Congress (0) i.e. the old Congress and Indira Gandhi's group Congress (R) i.e. the ruling Congress.

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Gandhi to the Hindu goddess Durga, and the Congress president said 'Indira is India, India is Indira.' During all these disturbances the railway minister L.N. Misra was assassinated in a bomb explosion at Samastipur in Bihar. Twenty-three others were also wounded. The Congress pinned the outrage on Jayaprakash Narayan. At this moment a decision of the Allahabad High Court allowing Raj Narain's election petition against Indira Gandhi and holding her responsible for misuse of power in it, made things more complicated. The opposition parties pressed her to resign and threatened to launch a nationwide agitation if she didn't. Mrs Gandhi decided to clamp the emergency, and 'troublemakers' in including Jayaprakash and Morarji were arrested and whisked away to unknown places in a surprise 'midnight swoop'. On 26 June 1975 President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed declared that 'a grave emergency exists whereby the security of India is threatened.' Government was authorized to suspend court proceedings regarding enforcement of civil rights and to conduct military operations to maintain public order. There were protest meetings all over, particularly in Bihar and Gujarat where the police had to resort to firing, killing more than thirty demonstrators.

The emergency was followed by press censorship and MISA (Maintenance of Internal Security Act) which empowered anyone's arrest and detention without disclosing the charges against him. There was of course something on the constructive side also, like the 20 points programme to which were added the five points of Sanjay Gandhi. But one of these viz. family planning was carried out with misplaced zeal which proved disastrous. Two vital constitutional amendments regarding fundamental rights and acquisition of proprty were made.[52] The Lok Sabha voted to extend its life till March 1977 and then till March 1978, but on January 1977 with still fifteen months to go, Mrs Gandhi announced elections. The results were astonishing. In the north of India not a single Congress party candidate (including Mrs Gandhi) was returned from the the traditionally Congress states of Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, only one each won from

52 See Section on Amendment of the Constitution, *ante*.

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Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan and four from West Bengal. On the contrary the Congress gained 112 seats in the south as against only six of the Janata party. Thus while the south supported Congress, the north virtually rejected it.

The Janata victory was sweeping and evoked a lot of interest in the foreign press. 'An inspiration to all democracies' the *New York Times* observed. The *Star of Canada* wrote that the election results 'stand as a beacon of freedom in a world where individual liberties are becoming increasingly limited.' The new government under Morarji Desai gave people new hope. The Janata leaders took a pledge at Mahatma Gandi's *samadhi* to work for the people's welfare. Jayaprakash Narayan spoke of a total revolution. It was all very spectacular and high sounding. But after the euphoria had worn out, and the multi-constituted party, the Janata, settled down to the task of government, things did not turn out at all well. For some time the people appreciated the Janata's tirades against 'the misguided policies' of the erstwhile Congress administration. But when six months passed and a year, and there emerged nothing but disparagement of the past, people began to ask, 'That's all very true, but what about you? It's time *you* did something positive.' It was just that, the inexperienced and cross-purposed new government couldn't do. Each party leader pulled his own way. There was no cohesion or collaboration. There was no originality of approach. Prices soared sky high. Nepotism and corruption mounted. Bickerings intensified. The people who had voted in the Janata, were sick of them. In fact the electorate of India were baffled and disillusioned. They had rejected one master and put one worse in the saddle. Voting seemed to be a choice between two evils. Anyway by 1980 the people had enough of the new government and, in the general elections, reverted to the old. Mrs Gandhi was back, wiser, more 'chastened and subdued', to vindicate the people's choice. The politicians had learnt a lesson or perhaps re-learnt an old one : 'You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.'

Another new trend in the Congress, as indeed in other parties too, is the entry of the youthful element. We have the Youth

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Congress, the Young Turks,[53] the Youth Janata and so forth. The infusion of young blood always revitalises a flagging organisation, but there is always the risk of over impetuosity; and it is a continuous process, for those who are young today are old tomorrow : 'We lived many lives in those whirling campaigns, never sparing ourselves any good or evil; yet when we had achieved, and the new world dawned, the old men came out again and took from us our victory and remade it in the likeness of the former world they knew. Youth could win, but had not learned to keep, and was pitiably weak against age. We stammered that we had worked for a new heaven and a new earth, and they thanked us kindly, and made their peace. When we are their age, no doubt we shall serve their children so.'[54]

Other Political Parties

(a) *The Praja Socialist Party*

The Praja Socialist Party (PSP) was a fusion of the Socialist Party and the KMPP (Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party) brought about on 26-27 September 1952 under the presidentship of Acharya J.B. Kripalani.

Its goal as proclaimed was 'a classless and casteless society free from social, political and economic exploitation.' The major polices of the party were defined as

1. An efficient and clean administration.
2. Equitable distribution of land, particularly to benefit landless labourers.
3. Expansion of decentralised industry.
4. Social organisation and control of industries that cannot be decentralised.
5. Independent trade union movement.
6. Devolution of political power.

53 Younger elements in the Congress on the leftist side.
54 T.E. Lawrence

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7. Reorganisation of provinces on a more rational and scientific basis.
8. A foreign policy of neutrality as between two power blocks.

Dissensions crept in when Nehru made the offer of a coalition government in 1953. Kripalani, Jayaprakash Narayan and Ashok Mehta favoured it, while Acharya Narendra Deva and Ram Manohar Lohia were against joining. In July 1953 the Forward Bloc merged with the PSP, and five objectives were spelled out. These were : increasing production, additional employment, improving productive equipment and capital formation, social and economic equality, and a strong state.

The party contested four general elections in 1957, 1962, 1967 and 1971, and a mid-term poll in Kerala in 1960 as part of the United Democratic Front. Its achievement in these elections was as follows :

	Lok Sabha	*State Assemblies*
1957	19	200
1962	12	149
1967	14	108
1971	2	11

The party was merged with the Samyukta Socialist Party (SSP) on 11-13 June 1971.

(b) *Bharatiya Kranti Dal*

This party was formed on the initiative of Humayun Kabir, on 14 16 May 1967 at Patna. The first convention was held at Indore on 11-12 November the same year. The party favoured the middle course, emphasising the ideology of Mahatma Gandhi and was in favour of a non-parliamentary type of government on the pattern of the one in USA. The following were its main objectives :

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1. Transformation of the mental attitude. This implied self-reliance, hard work and the corelation of the duties with rights
2. Abolition of the caste system. The BKD was for loosening the hold of caste.
3. Clean and efficient administration.
4. Strict maintenance of law and order.
5. In the economic field small farms and handicrafts or small industries of low capital, employment to all, and curbing private means of production.
6. In agriculture (to which the party gave top priority) small co-operative farms, minor irrigation works, the use of organic manure, consolidation of holdings, protection to tenants and providing all facilities like electric energy to cultivators.
7. In industry, small scale projects not involving costly machines, capital saving techniques, and intensification of exports.
8. Foreign policy—Mutual negotiations or settlements by international mediation, alliances favourable to the national interest, and making the frontiers strong. The party favoured development of nuclear weapons.

The party was formed late. In the mid-term polls of 1969 it scored a few successes in Haryana, Bihar and Maharashtra. In Uttar Pradesh it won 98 seats in a house of 425. In the mid-term poll to the Lok Sabha it got one seat in U.P. out of 67. In the U.P. legislature the BKD worked as single party government for about two months and thereafter in coalition for a little short of a year, during which period it took certain steps like taking over the sugar industry, reducing ceiling on land from 40 to 30 acres, distribution of surplus land, abolition of land revenue on holdings up to 3.125 acres, making membership of students's unions voluntary, and passing the preventive detention ordinance.

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(c) *The Communist Party*

After the declaration of independence in 1947 the Communist Party of India (CPI) stressed a united front of *kisans* (farmers) petty bourgeoisie and those interested in freedom and national advance. It did not favour mechanical application of the Russian or Chinese path of revolution but was for India's adopting its own path. The party adopted a new programme in February 1968 of which the prominent ingredients were : a socialistic and communistic society, individual liberty and freedom, anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism, elimination of all monopolies and combines whether indigenous or foreign and a reorientation of politics towards workers and peasants.

The achievements of the party were steady and improved with the years. In the 1952 elections it got 16 seats in the Lok Sabha and 121 in the states, in 1957 thirty in the Lok Sabha and significant success in Kerala, in 1962 32 seats in the Lok Sabha and 205 in state assemblies, in the mid-term poll of 1971 twenty-three seats in the Lok Sabha. In the 1977 elections, too, it took part and got 7 seats, with 2.82 per cent of the votes.

(d) *The Communist Party of India (Marxist)*

The CPI(M) became a separate entity in the latter half of 1964 breaking from the parent party (CPI). It is based, as the name indicates, on Marxism and Leninism, and advocates a more virulent opposition to the established order. Its main objective were nationalisation of industries, banks, plantations, mines and other property owned by foreign monopolists ; nationalisation of all heavy industries whether run by Indian or foreign agencies ; forceful and positive employee participation in management ; complete elimination of big landlords and feudal interests, and privy purses without compensation; raising wages and living and working conditions of labourers, artisans and peasants, and distribution of surplus land of big landlords to the poor ; shifting the tax burden from the rich to the poor ; and a total reversal of proourement, and price policies to

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benefit consumers, peasants and the poor. The party was also in favour of making the states stronger, as it felt that the constitution had concentrated too much power in the centre. Thus it advocated abolition of the post of governor and of president's rule in states, transfer of most of the subjects of the concurrent list to the state list, greater financial resources to states; and complete control by them on the all-India Services. In foreign policy, the CPI (M) was against imperialist powers, particularly America, and supported Asian countries in their struggle against imperialism.

The CPI (M) was a major electoral force in the three states of Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura. It won 22 seats (4.50 per cent of the votes polled) in the 1977 elections to the Lok Sabha.

(e) *The Samuktya Socialist Party* (*SSP*)

The history of the socialist parties in India is one of mergers and splits.[55] The SSP was formed in 1955 by Ram Monohar Lohia, when he and his followers separated from the PSP. The SSP looked upon the Congress as the greatest evil. It wanted to bring about a type of socialism which was different from that of Europe, by a process of social revolution. It favoured a phased socialisation of industries and means of production, but at the same time it championed small shopkeepers and retailers. It was against the use of the English language which, it thought, divided the nation.

The SSP got a big success in the elections of 1967. It formed coalition governments in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, but was not able to substantially achieve its programme through them.

(f) *The Dravida Munnetra Kazghagam* (*DMK*)

The DMK has emerged during the past thirty years or so as a leading party in Tamil Nadu (the old Madras state) and is quickly achieving national importance. Its forerunners were the

55 *Indian Political Parties*, (ed.) Dr. Subash C. Kashyap, Research, 1971, p. 270 (H. Hartmann, The Socialist Parties of India).

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South Indian People's Association and the Justice Party. and it was started as a reaction of non-Brahmins to unjust domination by orthodox Brahmins of Madras, Leading to a movement against imposition of the Hindi language and the Self-Respect campaign. These organisations were admirers of British rule and wanted a separate Dravidistan. They even went to the extent of burning copies of the Indian constitution when it came into force. This created a reaction, and the DMK was organised by C.N. Annadurai, popularly known as 'Anna'. Though sectarianism of southern states remained a principle, casteism was abandoned and Brahmins admitted. Five main objectives were defined by the DMK, as follows; social reform, propagation of Tamil language and culture, acceptance of democracy, socialism through constitutional means and, the establishment of an independent Tamilnad. The DMK has been the ruling party in Tamil Nadu after 1967 and has carried out with determination its duties towards a welfare state by schemes of education, medical facilities, agriculture and irrigation, social welfare schemes, labour welfare, and so forth. The DMK split up in 1972. Although it is still regarded as a regional party, it has changed its name from the ADMK to the All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) with the object of becoming a national party. In the election of 1977 it captured 19 seats in the Lok Sabha.

(g) *The Akali Dal*

The Akali Dal is a politico-religious organisation claiming to be the sole mouthpiece of the Sikhs. It was led by Giani Kartar Singh and Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke. In 1943 the Dal concluded a pact with the Congress, but dissolved it in 1950. Master Tara Singh, the Sikh leader, demanded a Punjabi suba with a Sikh majority on the basis of a Punjabi speaking state. In the mid-term poll of May 1969 the Akalis joined hands with the Jana Sangh, Swatantra, and even Communists with whom they had nothing in common, to fight the Congress, and was able to secure 43 seats in a house of 104. Soon however there were further splits in the Dal and the Jana Sangh withdrew its support, making the position of the Akali ministry precarious.

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The Akali chief minister. Prakash Singh Badal tried to woo the Congress. But the opposition of Gurnam Singh caused the Dal to oppose it in the mid-term Poll to the Lok Sabha in 1971. The result was that out of 13 Lok Sabha seats, the Dal got only one, the others going to the Congress. Despite the fact that the party has not been able to achieve cohesion, it managed to get 8 seats in the Lok Sabha election of 1977.

In recent years a splinter group of the Dal has arisen. This is the Dal Khalsa, whose most important leaders are Dr Jagjit Singh and Sardar Ganga Singh Dhillon, both of whom are abroad and have excellent rapport with both USA and Pakistan. The Dal Khalsa led a morcha of 'Khalistan flags' (Khalistan is the demand for a separate Sikh state). It contested the general elections in 1980 but was routed with the exception of one seat, which it got paradoxically from the over -enthusiasm of the government of India.

The Dal Khalsa was responsible for hijacking an Indian Airlines Boeing 737 to Lahore on 29 September 1981, to press their demands for which they had been violently agitating and for release of their leaders arrested as a consequence.[56]

In April 1982 the Dal Khalsa instigated its followers to desecrate Sikh gurdwaras and temples by putting the heads of slaughtered cows in them. Dal Khalsa posters found near the heads of cows threatened that such slaughter would continue till cigarette and tobacco sales were banned in the walled portion of the city of the Golden Temple. As a consequence of large scale disturbances following these incidents the government of India banned the Dal Khalsa and the National Council of Khalistan (an extremist Sikh organisation) under the Unlawfu Activities Prevention Act 1967.

The aforesaid parties are only the principal ones. There are many others. It is a feature of the Indian political parties tha there are many groups and ideologies, often overlapping and confusing. There is often lack of cohesion and conflicting objectives within the same party ; for example the Jana Sangh opposed the Congress proposal for co-operative farming and yet

56 *Northern India Patrica*, 30 September 1981.

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said that for the welfare of the peasant 'an agreed degree of t collectivisation would be an obvious remedy.'[57] Nevertheles he myriad political parties demonstrate the many facets ofs Indian political and social thought.

57 Craig Baxter, *The Jana Sangh*, Pennsylvania, 1969. p. 61.

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8

The Five-Year Plans

'The problem is to create a milieu in which the small man, who so far had little opportunity of perceiving and participating in the immense possibilities of growth through organised efforts, is enabled to put in his best in the interests of a higher standard of life for himself and increased prosperity for the country.'

Planning Commission: The Second Five-Year Plan

'In any project where 25 per cent is allotted for construction 20 per cent is misused. Only 5 per cent is properly spent....50 per cent of the cement goes into the black market. It goes there only through those having authority.'[1]

Gulzarilal Nanda Deputy Chairman Planning Commission 1965

The first to write on planned economy in India was Sir M. Visvesvaraya (1934). Three years later the Congress constituted a planning committee under Nehru's chairmanship to prepare a comprehensive economic plan. Political disturbances interrupted the progress, but K.T. Shah edited a number of reports. In 1944 a department of planning and development was created under Sir A.Dalal who was assisted by C.N. Vakil.

1 Speaking to his Constituency. Taya Zinkin, *Challenges in India*, Chatto & Windus, 1966, p. 71.

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A ten thousand crore plan of industrialists, known as the Bombay Plan, G.D.Birla's five-year plan and M.N.Roy's peoples's plan were other pioneering efforts.[2] A decisive step was taken with the creation of the National Planning Commission in 1950 with Prime Minister Nehru as its chairman and G.L.Mehta of the Scindia Shipping Company (later India's ambassador in Washington) as its deputy chairman. The finance minister and the minister for planning were its members, and there were a number of advisers and senior statisticians of merit. The chief ministers of the states and their development commissioners were associated with the Commission by being on the National Development Council.

Foreign ideas of planning doubtless had some influence on India's plans, for Nehru had been much impressed by the Soviet Five Year Plan which he had the occasion to study during his visit there in 1927. Nevertheless there were many differences. The Indian plans define the government's policy during the period covered by them and then try to fulfil them, maybe by measures much different from those envisaged in the original plan. Socialist plans lay down imperative and compulsory conditions. The Indian plans are global, covering all sectors of the economy. They are national economic plans.[3]

Among the directives of the constitution were, to provide an adequate means of livelihood to all citizens, equitable distribution of material resources, and avoidance of concentration of wealth and means of production in a particular class. Thus the principle as defined in parliament in 1954, was the adoption of 'a socialist pattern of society,' pragmatic socialism, as Nehru said. The aim of Indian planning was largely on these basic lines. A general all round improvement in the condition of the people was aimed at in regard to education, employment, prosperity, standard of living and so forth, on the one hand; and on the other a substantial progress of the country in industry, agriculture and other

2 A crore is ten million.

3 Charles Bettelheim, *India Independent* (trans. W.A. Casewell) Mac Gibbon & Kee, 1968, p. 147.

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resources. Emphasis was placed on assisting the weaker section of society and on doing away with inequalities in wealth.

The First Plan (1951-52 to 1955-56)

The first five-year plan had a twofold objective, viz., 'to correct the disequilibrium in the economy caused by the second world war and the partition of the country and to initiate simultaneously a process of all-round balanced development which would ensure a rising national income and a steady improvement in the living standards over a period of time.'[4]

The outlay of the first plan was initially 2,069 crore of rupees which was later raised to 2,378 crore. The actual expenditure, allowing for the price change during the period, was about 1,960 crore of rupees, i.e. a shortfall of about 418 crore. As the country had to import foodgrains on a large scale in 1951, the plan gave first priority to agriculture, community development, irrigation and power which took about 44.6 per cent of the outlay. Thereafter in descending order, were transport and communication, industry and mining and social services.

In the original plan, borrowing and budgetary resources of the centre and state government were expected to provide about 1,258 crore of rupees. This included revenues, income from railways, loans from the public, small savings and deposits and other miscellaneous sources. The gap of 811 crore (Rs 2,069-1,258 crore) was to be filled in the following manner: 521 crore by external assistance, additional borrowings and if necessary by deficit financing; and 290 crore by deficit financing alone. The size of the plan being raised to Rs 2,378 crore, the original gap was increased to Rs 830 crores. External aid was available for a limited amount and ultimately most of the gap (Rs 532 crore)[5] had to be met by deficit financing. On the whole the first plan made satisfactory progress. The chief danger in supplementing the plan expenditure through foreign

4 *India 1980*, Publication Division, Government of India, p. 201.

5 This is calculated as the difference between the actual inflow and the actual outflow.

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aid and deficit financing, was inflation. This was avoided and at the end of the first plan prices were lower by 13 per cent than what they had been at the start. The all-India cost of living index in 1955 averaged 96 compared to 100 in 1949. Money supply in public hands increased by about 208 crore of rupees, and national income by about 18 per cent. The Reserve Bank's holding of foreign securities, together with its balances abroad rose from 723.07 crore of rupees to 746.1 crore. The Indian per capita income recorded an increase of 10.5 per cent. The 1955-6 output of foodgrains, which was 64.8 million tons, was more than 10 per cent, since the beginning of the plan. Industrial production showed an overall increase of 40 per cent, the main gains being in cotton textiles, jute manufactures, sugar and so forth. Over 16 million acres of land were brought under irrigation by major and minor works. The generation of electric power was up by 4,425 kwh. Commerce, transport, cement manufacture, fertilisers, cables, telephone, locomotives, machine tools, newsprint and drugs like pencillin—all showed a rise. Manufacture of Indian made steel was greatly pushed up in order to meet industrial requirement. A new trend noticeable was state ownership and trading. Preliminary work on the installation of three steel plants and a heavy electrical plant was completed in the first plan period. Although the overall performance of the plan was most satisfactory, and the Planning Commission noted, there was 'more confidence and greater readiness all round for a larger effort', certain drawbacks might be pointed out.

1. Much of the agricultural prosperity achieved was due to good monsoons, even though, as said above, there was increase in power production and irrigation. India has about 19 crore hectares of cropped and cultivable area,[6] while the area under irrigation was 2.09 crore hectares in 1950-51 and 3.45 crore hectares in 1975-76. Thus despite increase in irrigated land, the major portion (more than 80 per cent) depends for its crops on the monsoons. The vagaries of the monsoon need no comments. It is not only that there are years of drought consequent to its

[6] Figures of 1974-75 *India 1980*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Table 14 : 1 (p. 207).

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failure, quite often there are floods in one portion and drought in another. In the 1950s luckily there were a series of good monsoons, and imports of foodgrains which had reached 4.73 million tons in 1950 had fallen to less than a million in 1955 and 1956. But the luck did not hold out for long and by 1965 about a dozen food crises had occurred. Till the major portion of India's cultivable land is not covered by assured irrigation (and that involves electricity and diesel too) India must remain a country of drought, and food insufficiency.

2. The first plan assumed a population growth rate of 1.25 per cent per annum for twenty years from 1951. This was an under-estimate, for, as the next decennial census of 1961 revealed, it should have been 2.4 or 2.5 per cent. Thus the unanticipated part of growth rate set all calculation awry. Little or no impact was made, for example, on the unemployment problem, and the plan left a backlog of 5.3 million.

3. The plan did not achieve a balanced economy. It ignored machine manufacturing industries, which was to prove a great drawback in necessitating import of machinery in the future. It also did nor give enough emphasis on chemical, electrical, and mechanical engineering.

4. It could not integrate physical achievements to money spending. Physical targets were reported to be overachieved despite shortfalls in outlays.

5. The integrated plan did not have annual break-ups of physical targets. Hence reviews and correctives could not be timely made and applied.

6. There was absence of crop planning, crop allocations and crop insurance, which were essential aspects of agricultural planning.

The first plan was really an experiment in planning. It spelled out, for example, the conceptual significance of 'deficit financing' as follows :

'to denote the direct addition to gross national expenditure through budget deficits, whether the deficits are on the revenue or on the capital account. The essence of such a policy lies therefore in government spending in excess of revenue it receives in the shape of taxes, earnings of state enterprises, loans from the public, deposits and funds, and other miscellaneous sources.

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The government may cover the deficit either by running down its accumulated balances or by borrowing from the banking system.'

A large part of the first plan was, in fact, 'a collatation and systematisation' of schemes already existing. As Jawaharlal Nehru said of it 'We just took what there was and called it a plan.' The plan was nevertheless a successful experiment and achieved much of what it envisaged target-wise, though not in terms of the socialistic pattern principle.

The Second Plan (1956-57 to 1960-61)

The first plan had succeeded beyond expectations and the flush of achievement hardly left scope for lessons to be learnt. This was unfortunate for future plans. A Taoist proverb says: 'Failure is the foundation of success, and the means by which it is attained.' The mistakes of the first plan were not only repeated in the second, they were augmented as well. Work on the second plan was started in April 1954 and the first draft was ready by May 1955. The preamble read:

'Our second five-year plan seeks to rebuild rural India, to lay the foundations of industrial progress and to secure to the greatest extent feasible, opportunities for the weaker and under-privileged sections of our people and the balanced development of all parts of the country.'

The main aims of the plan were :

1. An increase of 25 per cent in the national income.
2. Rapid industrialisation with particular emphasis on the development of basic and heavy industries.
3. Large expansion of employment opportunities.
4. Reduction of inequalities in income and wealth and a more even distribution of economic power.[7]

The plan aimed at increasing the national income from 7 to 11 per cent by 1960-61. Its stress was on industry—increased production of iron and steel, heavy chemicals and nitrogenous

7 *India 1980*, Publication Division, Government of India, pp 201-2.

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fertilisers. It was in favour of developing heavy engineering and machine building industry.[8]

The development (public sector) outlay was 4,800 crores of rupees (£3,600 million), shared between the states and the centre, the former contributing Rs 2, 241 crore and the central government Rs 2,241 crore. This meant an average annual expenditure of Rs 850 crore, a colossal figure. Industries and mining took away about 19 per cent of the total public sector outlay as against only 8 per cent in the first plan, transport and communications 29 per cent, out of which railways accounted for 19 per cent (as against 11 in in the previous plan). The financing of the plan was a ticklish affair. Rs 1,200 crore were to be obtained by deficit financing, Rs 800 crore surplus from current revenues, Rs 1,200 crore by borrowings from the public, Rs 400 crore by other budgetary resources, and Rs 800 crore by resources to be raised externally. This still left a gap of Rs 400 crore, which was proposed to be covered 'by additional measures to raise domestic resources.' Thus about a third of the plan was, as Tyson says, 'to be conjured out of thin air or very nearly so'.[9] Boldly conceived, the plan turned out to be, in Shakespearian language, 'vaulting ambition which o'erleaps itself.' Difficulties arose right from the beginning. A serious snag was 'the running down of foreign reserves at a much quicker rate than had been planned.' The second plan envisaged a number of large scale industries which required equipment from abroad. The plan anticipated a foreign exchange deficit of Rs 1,100 crore (£ 560 million approximately). This would be covered by drawing on foreign reserves to the extent of Rs 200 crore, the remaining gap being filled up from the following sources :

1. Floating public issues in foreign markets.
2. Arranging for bankers's credits and export credits for the supply of goods from foreign countries.

8 *Ibid*, p. 202.

9 Geoffrey Tyson, *Nehru the Years of Power*, Pall Mall Press, 1966, p. 40 (Referred to hereafter as 'Tyson').

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3. Borrowing from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the newly formed International Finance Corporation.
4. Loans and grant from other international institutions and from friendly foreign governments.
5. Private foreign investments.[10]

This meant, in brief, dependence on the existing external reserves and large foreign loans and grants. Both the sources turned out to be problematic. The reserves which stood at a tidy Rs 746.14 crore (about £560 million) at the end of the financial year 1955-6, fell to a mere Rs 136.25 crore (£102 million) by the end of March 1961. Foreign loans and grants, apart from the strings attached, took time for negotiation. A frantic effort was, therefore, made to curb the out-flow of foreign exchange by severe cuts on imports, minimising travel abroad, and rigorous scrutiny of foreign expenditure. But the amount was far too high to be covered by such devices, helpful though they were, and ultimately a heavy leaning on foreign aid was inevitable. This was mainly obtained through the World Bank which formed what came to be known as the 'Aid India Consortium'. Western countries, the largest being US, contributed.[11] At the same time, due to India's non-aligned policy, Russian aid was also forthcoming.

Despite the financial bottlenecks, the achievements of the second plan were much better than could be imagined. The national income was up by 20 per cent against the target of 25 per cent. The index of agricultural production (with the three years ending 1961-2 as base) rose from 84.4 at the end of the first plan to 102.7 at the end of the second. There was an 8 per cent increase in the per capita income. Production of foodgrains increased from 65.8 million tons to 76 million tons and the net irrigated area from 51.5 million acres to 70 million. Increases were also effected in mechanical farming, consumption of ferlilisers, seed farms, livestock, milk supply and so forth.

10 Tyson, 41-2.

11 Others were UK, Canada, West Germany, Japan, and later France, Italy, Belgium and Netherlands.

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Particular progress was made in community development, co-operatives and extension services.

In industries there was a cumulative rate of growth in industrial output of 7 per cent per annum. Three new steel plants were opened in the public sector and two in the private sector. Machine building industries registered a growth. The value of graded machine tools increased from Rs 34 lakh in 1950-1 to Rs 550 lakh in 1960-1. A coal mining machinery plant was set up at Durgapur and a foundry at Ranchi. Many new industrial items began to be produced indigenously, as for example locomotives, tractors, electrical goods, sewing machines, drugs and so forth. Village and small industries were expanded. Cloth production—*khadi*, handlooms, and other textiles—was increased.

The total installed capacity in production of electrical energy rose from 1.74 million kw to 3.77 million (though falling short of the target of 6.9 million kw). Production of coal, iron and bauxite, rose. There were significant gains in transport and communications, and substantial progress in social services (including welfare of backward classes), education and health, as some of the figures in this regard will show :

	Primary schools	*Secondary Schools*	*Colleges*	*Medical institutions*	*Doctors*
End of first Plan	2,10,000	7,300	542	8,600	56,000
End of Second Plan	3,42,000	17,000	1,050	12,600	70,000

Medical colleges increased from 30 to 57, and universities from 27 to 46. The average expectation of life improved by about 10 years.

The failures of the second plan were even greater than its

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successes, and they were more far reaching. The complacency created by adequate monsoons and consequent bumper harvests in the first plan period, had diverted attention from agriculture to industry. But the planners should have known that 'to be constant, in Nature were inconstancy.'[12] It was necessary that the monsoons would come with the same regularity, and in fact they didn't. The cut in agriculture, to augment industry, was a mistake. Besides the planners set about building up Indian industries much as a foundationless house. It became as difficult to run them as balancing a solid cone on its point instead of its base. What was needed was a gradual growth from village industries to small scale ones, and then on to medium sized projects, culminating in heavy industries. Then again industry is inevitably tied up with employment which was a problem the first plan had not solved, and the second had made worse by adding 3.5 million more unemployed to the 5.3 million already there. One would have thought that something along the lines of Gandhian economics with small industries employing the maximum number of people might have done more good.

The dimensions of the plan itself were breath-taking. It is always better, of course, to aim much higher than the target, but an arrow shot skyward is bound to stick nowhere and come again to the ground. An outlay more than three times that of the first plan was spectactular no doubt, but not prudent; and when a third of it was to be financed by funds which did not exist, it became a concept almost fantastic.

The result of the big-sized plan and its unrealistic mode of financing was bound to be felt in the long run, and some of it, as for example the price rise, was immediately discernible. Prices rose by 30 per cent in the five years of the second plan, i.e. 6 per cent each year. More money, accompanied by shortfall in production, particularly of foodgrains, and investments with no quick returns, brought about increased pressure of money demand against limited availability of goods. The ensuing inflation led to concentration of wealth in the hands of the few, and produced conditions just the reverse of the equalisation

12 Abraham Cowley (1618-67), *Inconstancy.*

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and the socialistic pattern of society which the plan aimed at. What was worse, the disturbed economy led to undesirable activities such as hoarding, black-marketing and black money. There was the swelling population to add to the confusion. It rendered progress ineffective, much like a climber negotiating a snowy mountain, slipping down more that he climbed up. In 1951 the Indian population was about 36 crore. In 1961, it was almost 44 crore,[13] and it kept going up at a steady rate. Poverty and overpopulation were fast becoming the Scylla and Charybdis for the ship of Indian progress.

The Third Plan (1961-2 to 1965-6)

The third plan was even more ambitious, with the public sector outlay of Rs 7,500 crore. The stress on foodgrains and agriculture production, which was absent in the second plan, was restored. The goal of a socialistic society in which there were no inequalities, was repeated. The objectives were defined as follows:

1. Increase in national income of over 5 per cent per annum, and the ensuring of a pattern of investment which could sustain this rate of growth during subsequent plan periods.
2. Self-sufficiency in foodgrains, and increase in agricultural production to meet the requirements of industry and exports.
3. Expansion of basic industries like steel, chemicals, fuel and power, and to establish machine building capacity, so that the requirements of further industrialisation could be met within a period of ten years or so mainly from the country's own resources.
4. Full utilisation of the man-power resources of the country, and the ensuring of a substantial expansion in employment opportunities.
5. Establishing progressively greater equality of opportunity

13 The exact figures are 361,088, 090 and 439, 234, 771 respectively.

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and bringing about reduction in disparities of income and wealth and a more even distribution of economic power.

The plan ran into unforseen difficulties right from the beginning with the outbreak of the Chinese war in the winter of 1962 and food shortages, and towards the end with the Indo-Pakistan war in September 1965. In between there was also a change in leadership with the death of Jawaharlal Nehru on 27 May 1964, Lal Bahadur Shastri succeeding him as prime minister. The priorities fixed were (in descending order) industry and mining (Rs 17.18 crore), agriculture, irrigation and community development (Rs 17.18 crore) transport and communication (Rs 14.86 crore) social and other services (Rs 13 crore) and power (Rs 6.50 crore).

Owing to the situation created by war and other disturbing factors, the financial resources for the public sector outlay had to be revised, the requirement being worked out as about Rs 8,500 crore. This was proposed to be met as follows: domestic and budgetary resources (including public loans, small savings, compulsory and annuity deposits and prize bonds and gold bonds) Rs 5,021 crore, external resources Rs 2,423 crore and deficit financing Rs 1,123 crore.

In any appraisal of the third plan allowance must be made for factors which were unforseen and could not possibly have been anticipated by the planners. The wars began with astonishing suddenness and caught the nation unprepared. Defence measures had to be taken in a hurry and at great cost. The result was so disastrous that conventional planning had to be suspended for three years from 1966 to 1969 and annual plans were formulated instead, within the framework of the draft outline of the fourth plan. The state of economy during these three years and the non-availability of financial resources meant virtually a plan holiday.

The national income at the 1960-61 prices rose by 20 per cent in the first four years of the plan, but registered a decline of 5.7 per cent in the last year. Agricultural production was erratic. It rose only in the fourth year (1964-5), after three

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years of stagnation. The aggregate index of agricultural production was 158.5 in 1964-5, which was 11 per cent higher than in 1960-1. The two subsequent years (1966-7) were years of drought, but subsequently there was improvement. Food crops and 25 million tonnes of foograins had to be imported. This too proved inadequate for the growing population,[14] and the per capita availability was lower than the 1961 level, except in 1965. Consequently there was great pressure on prices.

In the field of industry,too, progress was uneven. During the years 1961-65 there was stagnation and during the next three years a steady decline as the following figures will show (1960 base year):

1961-2	8.2 per cent	1965-6	4.3 per cent
1962-3	9.6 per cent	1966-7	1.7 per cent
1963-4	9.2 per cent	1967-8	0.3 per cent
1964-5	8.3 per cent		

Various factors were responsible for the poor progress, chiefly wars, droughts, fall in agricultural production, decline in savings, investments and purchasing power, and so forth. There were considerable shortfalls in production of fertilisers (550,000 tonnes against a target of 800,000 tonnes) and steel (4.6 million tonnes against the 6.8 million tonnes target. Despite this a number of important project were commenced, as for example the Heavy Engineering Corporation and the Mining and Allied Machinery Corporation. Progress was made in heavy electrical projects, machinery manufacture, textiles, sugar and cement, petroleum and petro-chemical industries. The targets for a number of industries were realised, such as aluminium, automobiles, electric transformers, machine tools, jute textile, pumps and diesel engines.

Small scale industries showed a fair deal of progress. About 120,00 small scale units were registered (as against 37,000 in 1962). About 360 industrial estates were completed by 1967-8 as against 66 in 1960-1. These employed 70,000 persons, and

14 The population was about 439 million in 1961 and by 1971 it had crossed 548 million.

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their annual production was Rs 93 crore. But the progress was not so marked in rural areas as in cities.

In irrigation the target in terms of utilisation was 15.1 million hectares in 1960-2 and the achievement 13.1. In 1968-9 the target was 17.5 million hectares and the achievement 17. In the year 1966-9 there was a marked-increase in the number of tubewells and pumping sets. To the 64,000 tubewells existing at the end of the third plan 160,000 were added, and an additional number of 700,000 pumping sets were installed. To the institutional resources of about Rs 100 crore during the third plan, over Rs 200 crore were added in 1966-9 tnrough the Agro Industries Corporation Land Development Banks and the Agricultural Refinance Corporation. In power 10.17 million kw was commissioned as against the target of 12.69 million kw. In the period between 1966-9 another 4.33 million kw was added. Advance was also made in rural electrification with an additional 69,000 villages electrified by 1969. There was significant increase in power consumption in the use of agriculture. Progress was made in railways, roads, shipping, telephones, post offices and transmitters, as the following table reveals.

	Railways (kms)	*Roads (thou) kms)*	*Transmitters (nos)*	*Shipping (mill. tons traffic)*	*Telephones (thou)*	*Post offices (thou)*
1960-1	52.2	236	59	40	465	77
1965-6	58.4	287	110	150	881	97
1968-9	59.6	317	127	55	1,100	102

The number of school going children in various classes increased, and there was progress in technical education also. The figures on the next page demonstrate the advance made :

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	Classes I-V	*VI-VIII*	*IX-XI*	*University*
1960-1	35 million	7 million	3 million	0.74 million
1968-9	56 million	13 million	7 million	1.69 million

In technological and engineering institutions the admission increases were 11,000 at the degree level and 22,600 at the diploma level. Expenditure on education from all sources increased from about Rs 354 crores in 1960-1 to Rs 850 crores in 1968-9.

On the medical side, the number of doctors increased from about 70,000 in 1960-1 to 86,000 in 1965-6, and to 102,000 in 1968-9. The doctor population ratio stood at 1 : 5,700 at the end of 1969. The number of medical colleges were 93 in 1968 as against 66 in 1961. A provision of Rs 27 crore of rupees was made in family planning in the third plan, and the actual expenditure was Rs 24.86 crore. A central institute of family planning was opened in Delhi. The number of sterilisation operations was 1.33 million. During 1967-8 the number exceeded 1.8 million. Attention was also paid in the third plan to training of agricultural and veterinary graduates and engineering personnel. Strides were made in providing houses and tenements. But the migration of people from villages to cities in search of employment, led to rise of slums. Towns suffered from defective and haphazard planning.

The third plan failed to check price rise. The general price index rose by 36 per cent, much more than in the first and second plans put together. What was worse was that the highest rise was registered in food articles (48.4 per cent). This threw the entire economy out of gear. Inflation led to rise in the cost of living and increases in wages, trading profits etc. The high dose of deficit financing was partly responsible, though failure on the agriculture and industry fronts—the ones most important, must also bear a large part of the blame. Another drawback was the mounting unemployment. About 17 million joined the unemployed making the figure 26 million. The plan aimed at only 14 million new jobs and the actual performance was poor.

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It was obvious that the money spent on the plans was not proving commensurate with results, and the planners could with justification have summed it all up in Lady Macbeth's words 'the attempt and not the deed confounds us.'[15]

The Fourth Plan (1969-74).

The fourth plan set forth the following objectives :

1. Greater equality in income and wealth
2. Progressive reduction of concentration of incomes, wealth and economic power.
3. More benefits of development to the relatively less privileged classes of society, specially the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

In general terms the draft said 'The broad objectives of planning could thus be defined as rapid economic development accompanied by continuous progress towards equality and social justice and the establishment of a social and economic democracy.'[16] The main purpose of the plan may be further summed up as (a) self-reliance (b) equal distribution of benefits and (c) steady and stable progress.

The plan aimed at a rate of growth of real national income of 5.5 per cent per annum. Allowing for a projected population growth of 2.5 per cent per annum, the per capita income was expected to rise by 3 per cent per annum, during the plan period. The expected per capital income would be Rs 639 in 1973-4 as compared to Rs 543 in 1967-8. The targets set were unambitious and modest. As regards agriculture and industry, the two main items of planning, the growth in the former was envisaged as 5 per cent per annum, and in industry 8 to 12 per cent.

The total plan outlay proposed was Rs 24, 882 crore, of which Rs 15,902 crore was to be in the public sector and Rs 8,980 crore in the private sector. The public sector outlay comprised

15 Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, II. ii. 11-2.
16 Fourth Five-Year Plan Draft 1969-74, p.5

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Rs 8,090 crore as outlay on central schemes, Rs 781 crore for centrally sponsored schemes, Rs 6,066 crore in the states and Rs 425 crore in the union territories.

Certain change in the principle of allocation of central assistance were made in the fourth plan. While population would remain the greatest single basis of assistance, efforts of states to improve their economy and their individual needs would also be taken into consideration. After providing the requirements of Assam, Nagaland and Jammu and Kashmir; central assistance would be given to other states on the following basis :

1. Sixty per cent on population.
2. Ten per cent on per capita income if below the national average.
3. Ten per cent on the basis of tax efforts in relation to per capita income.
4. Ten per cent in proportion to the commitments in respect of major continuing irrigation and power projects.
5. Ten per cent to assist states in their special problems like flood, drought, development of tribal areas etc.

Key schemes like survey and research, pilot projects, domonstrations, regional schemes and those of all-India importance, would be financed wholly by the central government.

Additional resources were expected to be Rs 4,280 crore (1,058 from states and 3,222 from the centre). Net market borrowings were to cover Rs 2,135 crore and small savings Rs 1,162 crore. The net external assistance was about Rs 2,087 crore, and deficit financing was estimated at Rs 2,087 crore (though it actually amounted to Rs 3, 000 crore).

The achievements were not too good except in the growth of exports, and that too was due more to the steep increase of world prices in between the plan years, rather than any internal success. Exports fetched higher earnings, and by 1972-3 reached Rs 1960.9 crore. In other respects conditions were not so favourable. There were power shortages and an oil crisis. Prices shot up. An increase in money supply (by 32.3

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per cent in 1971-73) led to distressing inflation and upset all plan expectations. The wholesale price level increased by about 23 per cent in the last year of the plan. The wholesale price index showed an average rise of 22.7 per cent in 1973-4 (when the increases between 1969 to 1973 were only between 3 and 10 per cent).

The objectives of the plan could hardly be realised in these adverse circumstances. The plan had aimed at reducing foreign aid to half the level of 1969-70. This could not be done, and so self-reliance remained a far cry.[17] The second objective, viz. even distribution of benefits, too, did not materialise. The industrial policy was to boost up heavy industries, the object being to push up exports. Although exports got more money due to the international price zoom, industrial progress fell short of target. Instead of an increase of 8 to 12 per cent as envisaged in the plan, it went up by 4 to 5 per cent only. Besides the planners played it safe with giving fresh licences for industry to those who had shown good performance. This meant a kind of monopoly, for new entrepreneurs could not enter the field. In agriculture, too, the plan stressed a package programme. According to this benefits were concentrated in fifteen districts, and these contained farmers who were so well off already that between them they were providing about an eighth of the country's foodgrains. Thus equal benefit remained merely an empty slogan, and in fact they got more who had more from before. With skyrocketing prices, persistent inflation, and a heavy dose of deficit financing, stability was quite out of the question.

The Fifth Plan (1978-83) and the Sixth (1980-85)

After 1974 planning became involved in politics. The Planning Commission published the draft of the fifth plan in the beginning of 1974 which was the final year of the fourth plan. Meanwhile the oil crisis and price rise assumed alarming proportions, so much so that in April 1975 the plan was declared

17 This net inflow of foreign assistance, which was Rs 443.8 crore in 1969-70 became Rs 354.8 crore in 1971-72 (Draft Fifth Plan Report).

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by the Commission to be obsolete. In its report the Commission said that the last two years had witnessed two major developments namely a sharp rise in indigenous prices as well as a fourfold increase in international prices of crude oil. Along with this there had also been 'a noticeable increase in world prices of various imported strategic raw materials and inputs'. This had resulted 'in substantial increase in non-developmental expenditure and a significant escalation in the cost of development programmes and projects.' The Commision therefore thought that it was necessary to review the resources position and readjust the various priorities in order to realise the basic objectives of the plan. The redrafted plan was expected to be finalised soon. Meanwhile on 18 January 1977 elections were announced. The verdict went against the Congress, and the Janata combine assumed power. The new government brought out another draft of the fifth plan in 1978 (The Draft Five Year Plan of 1978-83). In 1980 the three years old Janata government was voted out, and the Congress became firmly entrenched. Another draft of the plan followed, so that the 1978-83 plan worked for two years only. The new plan was the Sixth Five Year Plan 1980-85.

Although the plans from 1974 to 1980 have thus been mostly erratic, and of academic interest more than the instruments of practical implementation, it might be profitable to mention briefly their salient features.

The two main objectives of the fifth plan of 1974-79 were removal of poverty (*garibi hatao*) and achievement of self-reliance. These were more slogans for winning popularity than realistic goals, for with the wholesale price index soaring to 22.7 per cent and a staggering army of 40 million knocking about for jobs, one could hardly imagine a povertyless or a self-reliant society. Then there was the Malthusian dilemma. In 1971 the Indian people numbered about 43.5 crore. In 1981 the census figures registered 68 crore. The population had doubled during the thirty-four years of independence, and according to the registrar general census, it could double again by the turn of the century with the present growth

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rate.[18] The plan provided Rs 516 crore for family planning to stem this tide.

Along with the eradication of poverty the plan was for steady growth in industry and agriculture. A minimum needs programme was to ensure social justice and a fair standard of living. Rs 2,804 crore was allocated for this. In industry the target was an annual growth rate of 8 to 10 per cent, 7 per cent for exports and nearly 5 per cent for agriculture. Basic and key industries were to be developed in a big way.

The fifth plan was nearly two and a half times the fourth, with a total outlay of Rs 53,411 crore, out of which Rs 37,250 crore were in the public and Rs 16, 161 crore in the private sector. The total financial resources available for investment were estimated at Rs 47,561 crore (Rs 31, 400 crore in the public and Rs. 16, 161 crore in the private sector). Rs 5,850 crore were for financing current development outlay on plan account. The aggregate resources were Rs 53,411 crore. Deficit financing accounted for Rs 355 crore by the centre and Rs 1, 705 crore in the states.

The fifth plan ended in a fiasco. The wholesale price index for all commodities stood at 105.6 in 1971-2 and rose to 174.9 in 1974-5 (base year 1970-1). By September 1978 it had reached 186.6 and in another year 220.9. The consumer price index for industrial workers was 317 in 1974-5 and 331 in 1978-9 and for employees 221 and 306 respectively (base : 1960=100).[19] In imports, oil alone accounted for 80 per cent of India'a export earnings. Apart from the oil crisis and the spurt in prices, there were various other adverse factors. Irregular monsoons and droughts in 1972 and 1973 brought about crop failures. The agricultural production index (1961-2=100) fell from 131 in 1970-1 to 122 in 1972-3. The Indo-Pakistan war 1971 and the expenditure on rehabilitating Bangladesh refugees was a big drain on economy. Hoarders and profiteers made capital out of the situation, and the distribution system failed to ensure essential supplies at reasonable rates to the poor. Between the years

18 *Times of India*, 18 March 1981.

19 *India 1980*, Publication Division, Government of India, pp. 174-6 Table 11.10, 11.9 and 11.11.

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1969 and 1974 money supply increased by 70 per cent causing crippling inflation. Power shortage, paucity of transport, delays in projects and their haphazard and erratic execution, caused acute imbalances in basic materials such as cement, iron, steel and coal, without which economic progress remained mere wishful thinking. Food prices soared and production of even essential articles like vegetable oil, cloth, sugar and drugs, declined. To add to the economic glut there was the steadily mounting unemployment. Among those who lacked employment altogether there were a sizable 4 million persons in 1973 The number of persons who were only nominally employed in the sense that they could not find even an hour's work during a survey week, were about 10.1 millions.[20] *Garibi hatao* and self-reliance, which the fifth plan hoped for, thus remained only political slogans to woo the disillusioned dispirited masses.

The new Janata government drew up another five-year plan (1978-83). As it was bound to be, the plan was highly critical of previous efforts at planning. Some of the observations made in the draft plan are as follows :

'The concentration of economic power has increased....The expansion of large scale industries has failed to absorb a signifiicant proportion of the increment to the labour force....The major beneficiaries, especially of the banking system, have been the wealthier part of the population, both in the urban and rural areas, and the vast majority have barely been touched.... The level of malnutrition is still very high and not enough has been done by way of protected water supply and sanitation in rural areas to provide protection against water-borne diseases... we have still to attain the goal of universal primary education which the constitution had enjoined should be done within ten years....The degree of adult illiteracy continues to be massive: the present estimate being that over 200 million of the adult population is unlettered. The enrolment at the stage of higher education, which rose from 416,000 a year in 1950-1 to over 3 million currently, has led to a high degree of wastage and the growing unemployment of graduates. Much of the benefits of the infrastructure have accrued largely to the relatively affluent...

Draft Five Year Plan (1978-83) pp. 1 and 81.

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the rural areas continue to be poorly served in respect of the access to medical services....The total number of the poor so defined (i.e. who consume below the minimum calories) would be about 290 million.'[21]

The framers of the draft constitution reached the dismal conclusion 'we must face the fact that the most important objectives of planning have not been achieved, the most cherished goals seem to be almost as distant today as when we set out on the road to planned development.'[22]

Having realised the failings (and it was the first time a plan did so), one would have expected some revolutionary measures of removing them. But the plan was the usual stereotyped one, harping monotonously on the aims of achieving a higher rate of growth of economy, reduction in disparities of income and wealth, and self-reliance. There was nothing at all new in these ideas, and they were repetitions of old objectives.

The total resources for the plan were estimated as Rs 116,240 crore. The public sector outlay proposed was Rs 69,380 crore which represented 59.7 per cent of the total plan outlay. The plan was proposed to be financed as below :[23]

		crore rupees
1.	Public sector savings	27,445
2.	Savings by financial institutions	1,970
3.	Savings of the private corporate sector	9,075
4.	Household savings	62,365
5.	Net inflow from	
	(a) External assistance	3,955
	(b) Drawing on foreign exchange reserves	1,180

21 Draft Five Year Plan 1978-83, chapter 1 pp. 1-2.
22 *Ibid*, p. 2.
23 Draft Five Year Plan, 1978-83 Table 1:48.

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6.	Budgetary provision for current development outlay	10,250
	Total	116,240

The centre and states were to mobilise Rs 13,000 crore by additional taxes and by raising the surpluses of their respective public enterprises, and about the same amount by enhancement of railway freight and fares, postal and telephone charges, electricity tariff and bus fares.

The plan was even more ambitious than others before. It envisaged the realisation of its objectives not in the conventional five years period but in ten years. But to start with it worked out targets for an annual plan of 1978-79 'to bring the fifth plan to an end a year before it was due'. The outlay of this annual plan was Rs 11649.45 crore. Sector-wise the allocations were as follows in descending order: Energy, science and technology (30 per cent) transport and communications (15.3 per cent), industry and minerals (14.9 per cent), irrigation and flood control (13.9 per cent), social services (13.5 per cent) and agriculture and allied industries (12.4 per cent). Despite the pious pretensions about 'the main thrust of the planning strategy'[24] being on agriculture and irrigation, the former came last on the priority list. Irrigation got the fourth place among six items, and that, when the amount set forth for it (Rs 9,650 crore), included flood control as well, which strictly speaking, may be allied to agriculture in the sense of preventing damages to crops, but is not irrigation at all. Reliance on external assistance, too, was by no means small. The minimum needs programme, which was to cover elementary and adult education, provision of electric power, roads, drinking water and health facilities to villages, nutrition and urban housing schemes for the poor, was alloted Rs 4,180 crores. It was said by the planners that they were making an advance on the previous (fifth) plan inasmuch as while it had put apart Rs 2,804 crore for minimum needs, the amount was slashed down to about

4 Draft Five Year Plan (1878-83).

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Rs. 800 crore over the years 1974-8 due to the inflationary crisis.[25] Inflation, however, did not end; rather it kept rising. So the possibility was that if the new government had got the chance to try out their plan in full, they might also have been faced with the same difficulties. If one considers the rise in prices from 1977-8 to 1979 (September), it is apparent economy did not make any headway, despite the tall promises of the 1978-83 plan, and this of course applies to all preceding plans as well.[26]

With the Congress government voted into power again in 1980, the Planning Commission was reconstituted, and started work on a revised five-year plan in 1980. The plan was finalised in January 1981 as the 'Sixth Five Year Plan'. In the foreword the prime minister and chairman of the Planning Commission observed: 'Economic growth must be balanced, it must ensure self-reliance stability and social justice. All sections should be assured that there will be no discrimination. No society can prosper if merit is not given its due'.[27] In the preface, the deputy chairman rightly said that 'the success of the plan depends crucially on the efficiency, quality and texture of implementation.' But then followed a mysterious remark: 'a special responsibility devolves on that segment of the population which has benefited disproportionately from planned development so far...' It is a million dollar question who this class would be. Anyway it would seem to be a kind of veiled admission that India's plans have been benefiting the wrong type of people. Nobody will dispute that economic stability, self-reliance, social justice and recognition of merit, are all ideals which must be translated into practice. Unfortunately it would be difficult to conscientiously say that they have ceased to be just ideals. The total outlay of the sixth plan is Rs 97,500 crore of which Rs 47,250 crore isin the central sector and

25 Draft Five Year Plan, 1978-83 p. 10.

26 Some comparative figure of the wholesale price index (base 1970-71 =100) for this period are: primary articles (183.8-207.8); food articles (173.6-189.7); fuel power, light and lubricants (234.3-296.0); manufactured products (179.2-219.1); and all commodities (176.6-220.9).

27 Sixth Five Year Plan 1980-85, Government of India, Planning Commission.

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Rs 50,250 crore in the states and union territories, The share of the latter works out to 51.54 per cent. Thus the plan is the biggest ever. So too are the objectives, which now are listed as ten. In brief these are: better economy; more modernisation; reducing poverty and unemployment; exploiting indigenous sources of energy; improvement in the life of the people generally and of the socially handicapped, particularly; reduction in inequalities by better amenities to the poor; progressive reduction of regional imbalances; voluntary family planning to stem population growth; improvement in ecology and environment; and the involvement of all people in planning through education, communication and institutional strategies. There is little that is new in these objectives; just old wine in new bottles, only the bottles are bigger. Self-reliance, *garibi hatao* and rapid economic development, the keynotes of all previous planning, are the main goals of this one too. The inclusion of improvement in ecology and environment, however, is to be welcomed as a new contribution and one sorely needed, even though the forty crore provided for it is to be by the centre alone. It might have been advisable to ask the states to contribute their mite also, for it will be largely left to them to decrease noise, atmospheric and other pollution in towns and villages. Had they a share in the funds, they might have felt responsibility more. Besides, it is no use having merely committees, organisations and publicity for the purpose as is envisaged in the plan.[28] Publicity will only mean more loudspeakers blaring out what noise and environmental pollution is (there are many already employed in the service of religion, film music, 'auspicious occasions' and announcements). Every one knows what such pollution is, or if he does not know, at any rate he can feel its effect. The important thing is not to tell people about it, but to stop it.

In the public sector outlays the following priorities have been laid down :

28 Sixth Five Year Plan 1980-85, pp, 346-51.

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(In crores of rupees : listed in descending order)

Main Development Head	*Total Public Sector Outlay*
1. Energy	26,534.44
2. Industry and Minerals	15,017.57
3. Social Services	14,035.26
4. Irrigation and Flood Control	12,160.03
5. Agriculture	5,695.07
6. Rural Development	5,363.73
7. Communcation; Information and Broadcasting	3,134.26
8. Transport	2,411.97
9. Special Area Programmes	1,480.00
10. Science and Technology	865.20
11. Others	801.47
Total	97,500.00

Energy has rightfully been given the first place, for without it there cannot be any worthwhile progress either in agriculture or industry. The most important item is of course, electricity and Rs 19,265.44 crore out of Rs 26,535.44 crore, the lion's share, has been allotted to it. The all-India generating capacity is expected to rise to 51,192 mw at the end of 1985 as against 31,000 by the end of March 1980. Out of this the major portion (33,708 mw) will be thermal. This means more coal. The existing mines are producing 70.93 million tonnes and the plan expects to be getting 165 million by undertaking new projects, and improving distribution by new rail lines and sidings. By May 1981, however, the coal production had already fallen short by about 6 per cent of the target amount for 1980-1 (121 million tonnes : 114 milion tonnes).[29] As for oil, for which the plan provides an outlay of Rs 4,300 crore, things do not seem to be going smoothly. *India Today* reports 'As India's off-shore oil exploration drive shifts into top gear, there are already strong indications that it has run into rough weather. Officials of the ministries of finance and petroleum were at loggerheads with each other last month over a $ 65

29 *India Today*, 16-31 August 1981, p. 89.

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million (Rs 58 crore) deal involving a drill barge needed for oil exploration .... Caught in the crossfire between the finance ministry and the petroleum ministry the Mission Viking deal appears to have fallen through, at least for the time being.'[30] Another big project, the prestigious multi-purpose Tehri Dam, is also reported 'to be sailing through a rough weather.' The 6,269 metre rock filled dam which will be highest in Asia, was initially estimated to cost Rs 200 crore in 1971. The cost has now shot up to Rs 827 crore due to delays and price rise. 'Lagging far behind the schedule, the giant project has been confronted with financial strains, land acquisition problems and to cap all a sharp opposition from ecologists and local people.'[31]

Irrigation, an essential requisite to agricultural growth, has been given fourth priority in the sixth plan, and both agriculture and irrigation along with rural development rate below social services. Industry and minerals still get importance over agriculture, for the outlay on them is more than that on agriculture combined with rural development. Besides, although the plan aims at a massive attack against unemployment and agricultural development, it is difficult to see how this will be accomplished with the meagre outlay proposed on small scale industries. The amount set apart for village and small scale industries in the public sector is only Rs 1,780.45 crore, out of which Rs 923.40 crore is to be contributed by the centre and the rest shared by the states and union territories. Out of this *khadi* and village industries get Rs 547.09 crore, handlooms Rs 310.93 crore, handicrafts Rs 110 90 crore, small scale industries including industrial estates Rs 616.10 crore and powerlooms just Rs 4.15 crore (the remaining 164.56 crore going to agriculture and 26.72 crore to coir). When we take into account the fact that the plan redefines small scale industries as those up to 20 lakh and ancilliary units up to 25 lakh of rupees, the emphasis on the really small village industries is too weak to generate the employment increase of 34.279 million person years envisaged in the plan. The plan takes note of the

30 *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie 1 October 1981, p. 116.
31 *Pioneer*, 12 October 1981.

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tardy progress in taking over and distributing ceiling surplus land. Out of about 15.74 lakh hectares only about 9.56 lakh have been taken possession of, and about 6.79 lakh hectares distributed. The pace of consolidation of holdings has not been satisfactory. Only about a fourth of the land (45 million hectares) which was to be put under this operation, has been consolidated. The main impediment to agricultural production, however, seems to be small holdings, particularly in the large wheat growing states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, where farms are generally less than 8 acres.[32] Consolidation is only a half measure, for a few years after, fragmentation caused by partitions and successions restores the status quo. The 1980-85 plan as well as the ones before it, do not even touch this vital subject. The reason is obvious. It is a tussle between creating favourable conditions for optimum production and pleasing and accommodating the largest numbers. The solution is linked with family planning and diversion of people from land to small village industries. Unfortunately the plan, though emphasising both these factors, has no bold solution for either. In family planning nothing much seems to be envisaged except fixing the targets, a total number of 22 million sterilisations and 7.90 million IUD's. The plan observes that the family planning programme has 'to be made part of the total national effort for providing a better life to the people', and that 'it must rise above all controversies and should be accepted as a national programme by all sections of the population.... Family planning cannot be the sole resoponsibility of any one department but of the government as a whole. The areas of useful activity in each ministry/department in relation to family planning will have to be identified, spelt out in precise terms and responsibility for these activities squarely fixed on the ministries/departments concerned.'[33] As the proverb has it 'Everybody's business is nobody's business.' Besides the 'areas of useful activity' do not seem to have been identified for the various ministries, nor have their responsibilities been fixed. The mistakes

32 Hiro, 88.

33 *Sixth Five Year Plan 1980-85*, Government of India, Planning Commission, p. 375.

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made in the family planning drives of 1976 seem to have been the dirge for family planning. The Draft Five Year Plan of 1978-83 was so shy of it that it did not even dare mention it by name, calling it 'family welfare' instead. The sixth plan treats it with caution.

Science and technology have been allotted only Rs 865.20 crore which is even less than the special area programmes. While it is true that backward parts of the country need development, an important national programme which includes in it development of atomic energy, scientific research and the space programme, ought to have been given higher priority.

The highlights of the estimates of the plan resources are: market borrowings (excluding those of financial institutions) Rs 19,500 crore; small savings Rs 6, 463 crore; provident funds Rs 3,702 crore; foreign resources Rs 9,929 crore and drawing on foreign exchange reserves Rs 1,000 crore. There is to be an additional resource mobilisation of Rs 21, 302 crore and the gap of Rs 5,000 crore is to be covered by deficit financing. Central assistance is to account for Rs 15,350 crore.

The weak point, apart from the foreign resources and deficit financing—which have in fact been the stumbling blocks of all the plans before, and yet over-ambitious planning keeps on repeating them—is the provision of mobilisation of additional resources, and that too for the huge sum of over Rs 21,000 crore (almost $ 21,000 million). Of this Rs 12,290 crore is to be borne by the centre and Rs 9,012 crore by the states. The plan envisages raising this sum by additional taxation, but noting that the scope of taxation is limited in an already over-taxed country, the main thrust is to be on 'reducing tax evasion, rationalising tax laws, streamlining tax administration and widening the tax base in the urban sector, and tapping the surpluses of the affluent section of the farming community.... reduction in subsidies and substantial improvement in the financial return on investment in the public sector undertakings, both of the centre and the states, through appropriate measures.'[34] The task, however, is a difficult one. The tax base is already wide enough, and the rates for higher slabs are so exorbitant

34 *Sixth Five Year Plan, 1980-85*, p. 66.

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that in fact that in itself becomes one of causes of tax evasion. 'Streamlining tax administration' is apt to boil down to increasing the volume of staff, which means more expenditure rather than savings. 'Taxing the affluent section of the farming community' is easier said than done. For one thing affluent farmers can be counted on the fingertips, those are the ones who have enough political influence to prevent any such law going through. No government is likely to be bold enough to tax the rural sector. For example in October 1981 a hike in rates for electricity was announced in Uttar Pradesh. But it was made clear that this was only for domestic and industrial consumers, not for the rural sector. Tax evasion is of course very much there. But again, its detection and prevention is rather difficult. 'According to rough estimates there may be about Rs 20,000 crore of black money in our economy. And this money has also got a higher velocity being mostly in cash, and thus influencing market forces directly. For example, the real estate prices have shot up in the country but in official transactions they are still quoted at much lower figures. The rest being paid in black money.'[35] Improving the performance of government public sector undertakings is possible, but that too is an uphill task and a problem by itself. Some of them, as for example Scooters India, are running at heavy losses for years.

Deficit financing accounts for Rs 5,000 crore against an outlay of Rs 97,500 crore. This has remained a regular feature of the plans, as the following figures will show:

(In crores of rupees)

	First Plan	*Second Plan*	*Third Plan*	*Fourth Plan*	*Fifth Plan*	*Sixth Plan*
Public Sector Outlay	2,356	4,800	7,500	15,902	69,384	97,500
Deficit Financing	532	1,200	1,150	3,000	2,226	5,000

Thus it will be seen that deficit financing has been taking a progressively more prominent place in each of the plans. The

35 *India Today, August 16-31, 1981*, p. 2 Letter to Editor, J.S. Maini.

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percentage, however, works out to be the lowest in the sixth plan seeing the size of its outlay.

It is too early to say how the sixth plan will turn out in performance. Inflation has gone down during the last year, according to the claim of the Indian finance ministry. But the assessment of the Reserve Bank of India is quite different. In its report on 'the trend and progress of banking in India 1980-1' it observed 'notwithstanding the remarkable recovery staged by the economy, there appears to be little abatement of inflation.[36] Though the net investment, the RBI report said, had gone up by 19.1 per cent during 1980-81 from 17.6 in the provious year, the improvement in capital formation was due to larger foreign resources (2.1 per cent as against the previous year's 0.5). 'There were no indications to halt much less a reversal of the the inflationary trend' the report said... 'The rise in prices of most of the primary articles of fuel and finished consumer goods resulted in increase of 18.7 per cent in the all-India consumer price index for industrial workers.'[37] According to the central finance minister, R. Venkataraman 'on an annual basis the rate has now come down to 7.8 per cent from as high as 23 per cent in late 1979-80.'[38] The new rate however has been computed on the basis of the wholesale price index in the third week of Septembor 1981, and this can hardly be a reliable basis for claiming improved conditions. Since the consumers have to deal withr etailers 'their interest in the wholesale price index is wholly academic.'[39] Meanwhile 'the common man is, if anything, worse off than before.'[40] Regarding economic progress in major items, reports appear to be conflicting. The finance minister and his economic affairs secretary say that 'coal production, power generation, fertiliser output and railway movements have all maintained upward trends.'[41] Planning Commission sources, however, say that 'unless there is a pickup in production, shortages are likely to develop in such crucial items as cement,

36 *The Pioneer*, 12 October 1981.
37 *The Pioneer*, 22 October 1981.
38 *Ibid*, 17 December 1981.
39 *The Pioneer*, Editorial, 15 October 1981
40 *Ibid.*
41 *Ibid.*

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steel, fertilisers, newsprint and commercial vehicles with the consequent inevitable pressure on prices.'[42] Industrial progress leaves much to be desired. Former chairman of HMT Limited, Dr S.M. Patil observed in the Nehru Commemorative Lecture on public sector undertakings : 'as many as 23,768 private sector industries (small, medium and large) were sick and received assistance to the tune of Rs 1,733.94 crore.'[43] In any case there are still four years of the plan to go. All seems to depend on four vital factors : the success in population control ; the creation of employment ; the progress in generation of power, and the mobilisation of domestic resources. And these happen to be just the weakest links in the plan.

The Plan Achievement : Its Failure and Possible Remedies

(*a*) *Achievements and Failures*

The Planning Commission was set up in March 1950, and even before it there was the Bombay Plan and M. N. Roy's People's Plan. In a way India has been on the road of planning from right after independence. There have been six five-year plans i.e. about thirty years of planned development. The objectives and ideals of planning as spelled out in each of these plans sound promising indeed—a socialistic pattern of society with no one in it poor or hungry, factories busily humming away, flourishing irrigated fields, plenty of jobs, self-reliance and prosperity. But what really has been achieved ?

The gross national product (GNP) at current prices and at 1970-1 during the years has turned out as follows :[44]

Base year 1970-1

	1970-1	1971-2	1975-6	1976-7	1977-8
At current prices	100.0	107.21	79.6	194.2	213.3
At 1970-71 prices	100.0	101.6	115.8	117.6	126.2

42 *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 16-31 August 1981, p. 89.
43 *The Pioneer*, 7 November 1981.
44 *India 1980*, Publications Division, Government of India, p. 167, Table 11.1.

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These figures would indicate a steady progress. The fact, however, is that quite a large proportion of people live in poverty. Mohan Dharia, Minister of Planning in the central government told parliament in August 1972 'Between 40 per cent and a half of all Indian citizens are living in conditions of abject poverty. This number is as large (today) as it was two decades ago.'[45] In a study made by Dandekar and Rath only about six years back, it was found that '40 to 50 per cent of the total population of India has a per capita income below the official poverty line where malnutrition begins', and 'the per capita income of this group has declined over the last two decades' even though 'the average per capita income had gone up.'[46] S. Patel, an Indian economist said in 1971 'The top 5 per cent appear to be responsible for as much as 22 per cent of the national income which is slightly higher than that received by fully one half of the population.'[47] 'Surveys conducted by the state nutrition divisions and the National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau' says a Government of India publication, 'have revealed that the protein calorie malnutrition and deficiency diseases are prevalent in large sections of the population.'[48] Paresh Chattopadhyaya, who made a study on the Indian standard of living, says 'Taking a conservative estimate of Rs 15 per capita income per month (at 1960-1 prices) as the minimum level of living in the Indian rural areas, a recent survey has shown.... (that) the percentage of the population below the minimum level in rural India went up from 38 in 1960-1 to 53 in 1967-8, thus registering a rise of about 40 per cent in less than a decade During the same period the corresponding percentage in urban India rose from 32 to 41.'[49] The Indian people remain underfed, apart from lacking a balanced diet. To some extent

45 *Indian Express*, 10 August 1972, Quoted Hiro, 7.

46 Alak Ghosh, *Indian Economy, Its Nature and Problems*, World Press, 1975, p. 172 (Referred to hereafter as 'AKIE').

47 Hiro, 97.

48 *India 1980, A Reference Annual*, Publications Division, Government of India, 1980, p. 108.

49 Hiro, 86-7 (*Frontier*, 1 January 1972, p. 11).

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the latter can be attributed to faulty food habits, but it is also largely due to high prices beyond the approach even of the middle classes. The per capita availability of foodgrains declined from 16.1 ounces (457 grams) per day in 1954 to 14.7 ounces (417 grams) in 1973, and that of cloth from 14.4 metres to 12.1.[50] The inevitable conclusion is that poverty has not been eradicated, and far from reaching a socialistic pattern of society, imbalances have become more sharply defined. The rich have become richer. The poor have remained poor and in fact their ranks have swelled up even more. Professor Alak Ghosh sums up the plan achievement in this regard as follows :

The problem of poverty in india is both alarming and challenging. Dandekar and Rath have calculated that if for the twelve year period (viz. 1968-9 to 1980-1), national income rises by 53 per cent (implying a growth rate of 3 per cent during the fourth plan and 3.75 per cent per annum during the next 7 years), then it is expected that 35 per cent of the rural population and a little under 50 per cent of the urban population shall be still living below the poverty line. In absolute terms, about 193 million persons in the rural areas and 69 million persons in the urban areas will be still classed as poor. *In other words, 262 million (or 38 per cent of the total population)* shall be living below the poverty line. 'Thus even ten years after the first two decades of the planning experiment the problem of poverty would be both stupendous and baffling.'[51] Even today 48.1 per cent of the Indian people live below the poverty line.[52]

Another strange condition created either because of the plans or despite them, is the steep rise in prices and side by side increased money supply. The prices of food articles, fuel, power and light, and in fact of most commodities have soared between 1971 and 1975, except in one or two years. The wholesale price index (1961-2=100) for wheat was 213.6 in 1971 and 357.2 in 1975 ; fuel, power, light and lubricants 175 and 322 ; machinery and transport equipment 161.7 and 267.0 ;

50 Hiro 87.
51 AKIE, 103.
52 *The Pioneer*, 26 October 1981 (Study conducted by the PH Chamber of Commerce and Industry).

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industrial raw materials 187.4 and 290 ; chemicals 201.5 and 327.9 ; and manufactures 168.9 and 251.3. The rise for all commodities taken together was from 187.4 to 307.0. At the same time money supply, which was 2,868,61 lakh of rupees in 1960-1 went up to Rs. 7,139,97 lakh in 1970-1 and to Rs. 11,827,46 lakh (provisional) in April 1975.[53] While the price rise caused distress to the poor sections, the increased money supply led to inflation and a spending spree for the rich.

The other goal of planning, frequently repeated in plan objectives, was self-reliance. That too is as distant as ever. The total value of imports is shown as in the table below :[54]

1950-1	1965-6	1970-1	1972-3	1973-4
65,021	1,40,853	1,63,420	1,86,744	2,95,537
1974-5	1975-6	1976-7	1977-78	1978-79
4,51,993	5,26,520	5,07,395	6,02,023	6,78,864

(In lakhs of rupees)

Thus, except in 1976-7 when there was a slight decrease, imports have been steadily increasing and between the years 1950-1979 have become more than tenfold. Foodgrains have had to be imported despite the fact that India is largely an agricultural country. From 1951 to 1972 the quinquennial increase in million tonnes was 12.1, 19.13, 25.35 and 31.44. There was a sharp decline to below half a million tonnes in 1973, but in1973 the import was 3.62, in 1974 over 5.5 million, 1975 7.4 million and in 1976 6.5 million. It declined in 1977 to 0.6 million, but in 1981 again about 1.5-2 million tonnes of wheat had to be imported.

Foreign aid is another arena of failure in the plans. It was to be a temporary measure, but not only has it come to stay, it has achieved large proportions. During the first plan foreign aid financed 8 per cent of the government investment, 25.2 per

53 AKIE 620-3 (Tables 7.1 and 7.2).

54 *India 1980, A Reference Annual,* Publications Division, Government of India, p. 342 (Table 19.3).

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cent in the second plan and 30.5 per cent in the third. Instead of self-reliance, India began to plead for aid in local currency to the maximum possible extent.[55] But foreign countries were reluctant to lend money to India in their own currencies for its foreign debt had increased by 217 times between the years 1960 to 1972 (Rs 32 crore or £ 16 million to Rs 6,954 crore or £ 3,477 million).[56]

In education, the number of literates in 1981 were 237, 991, 932 out of a population of 683,810,051 giving a percentage literacy of about 35.[57] But a literate person means one who can just read and write, perhaps only s gn his name and make out the vernacular alphabets and figures. The figures of those who attended schools for regular education are as follows for the year 1978-9.[58]

	Students in crores	*Percentage*
Classes I-V	7.2	9.4
Classes VI-VIII	1.8	3.8
Classes IX-XII	0.9	1.9
University	0.3	0.6

(The population has been taken as 68.4 crore, 1981 census).

The really educated persons, thus, are only a fragment of the population.

Coming to food production, there has been steady progress from 1950 to 1979 :

1950-1	55.011 thousand tonnes
1960-1	82.326 thousand tonnes
1970-1	108.422 thousand tonnes
1978-9	131.370 thousand tonnes

Despite this food imports have continued. The reason

55 *Economic and Political Weekly*. Quoted Hiro, 87.
56 *Statistical Outline of India 1972-3*, p. 118. Quoted Hiro, *ibid.*
57 Census Figures of 1981 Census
58 *India 1980* (Table 5-1).

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obviously is the spurt in population. But there are other no less weighty causes. The foremost is failure to ensure irrigation facilities. Of the net area sown only 24.8 per cent (i.e. 3.48 crore hectares) is irrigated.[59] Of this only 1.38 are irrigated by canals; the rest by tanks, wells and other sources.[60] Thus land having assured irrigation is very little indeed. The distribution of irrigation facilities, too, is unequal. In the Punjab and Haryana, for example, the irrigated area is over 70 per cent. In Uttar Pradesh, which is one of the largest of states, it is only 50.9 per cent.[61] The small size of the holding also discourges the cultivator as he is too poor to invest productively in his land. In the large wheat growing areas of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar four-fifths of farmers's households have land below eight acres, and thus can not even afford a tubewell. The average holding in the rice-growing districts of West Godavari Andhra Pradesh is even smaller, being just 1.4 acres.[62] Another significant fact about agricultural production is that the increase is due to more land being brought under the plough, not because of more scientific methods. Compared to other countries, both productivity per acre and crop yields are markedly low, despite government efforts towards intensive farming. The Indian cultivator cannot afford essential inputs because of small holdings and he is eternally in debt either to the government or to the village money-lender. He lacks transport and proper storage facilities, and the only source of irrigation he can afford is by a government canal if one happens to pass near his field. The supply of water through that too is not always certain or dependable. The plans did not give enough importance to agriculture. It was seldom on the first priority. The second plan's outlay was only Rs 276 crore against the total of Rs 4,600 crore. The third plan's performance in agriculture was poor (only 2 per cent growth per year against the expected 6). The fourth plan efforts yielded only 105 million tonnes in the last year of it, against the 129 million target. On the whole results cannot be

59 India 1980, 206.
60 *Ibid*, 208.
61 *Statistical Diary, 1980*, State Planning Institute U.P. p. 4.
62 Hiro, 88-89, *op. cit.*

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considered commensurate with the effort. This was noticed by Jawaharlal Nehru India's prime minister. 'In no other country, he said in 1959 'has so much been spent on agriculture. There are some good results, but, in general, they are lower than expected. Where has the money gone ? I do not mean that it has been stolen. But it has not been properly used.'[63]

In industry performance was somewhat better. The plans have given importance to small scale and village industries like handloom, *khadi* and so forth, but unfortunately techniques remain outmoded and unscientific. In heavy industries the plans tried to achieve ambitious targets. In the first and second plans three new steel plants each of 10 lakh ingot tonnes capacity were set up. Advance was made in cement, paper, chemical, drugs and so forth. But the combined output of the new steel plants was only 9 lakh tonnes as against the target of 20. Important projects like the Sindri fertiliser factory and the ones at Nangal, Neyveli and Rourkela, as well as the heavy electrical project at Bhopal, were delayed due to one reason or the other. In the third plan, the first four years went well but after that there was a steep decline. In the fourth plan both investment and production fell short of expectations. Against an average rate of growth of expected industrial production of 7 per cent in the fifth plan the actuals were 2 6, 6, 9.5 and 3.9 for the years 1974-8. The sixth plan's outlay for industry is 14.9 per cent of that of the public sector. But progress is apparently not at all good. The targets and production rate are as follows :[64]

		Coal	*Crude Oil*	*Cement*	*Fertilizers*
Target	1981-2	121	16.8	22.0	32.0
Production	1980-1	114	10.5	18.5	21.5

(All items except commercial vehicles in million tonnes.

63 *The Hindu*. 21 November 1959, Quoted in C. Bettelheim, *India Independent*, MacGibbon and Kee, 1968, p. 205.

64 Chart and observations from *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 16-31 August 1981, p. 89.

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Newsprint	*Commercial Vehicles*	*Sugarcane*
7.0	85,000	182
4.8	71,000	152

Commercial vehicles in number produced).

The industrial growth rate in January-May 1981 was round about 9 per cent, but the output was much short of targets. 'The leeway to be made varies from 6 per cent in the case of coal...to as high as 60 per cent in the case of crude oil'. The position regarding cement, which is indispensable in executing projects, is disturbing. The demand supply gap has increased from 3.5 million tonnes in 1978 to over 6.5 million tonnes in 1980-81. Cement production has remained stagnant at a little over 19 million tonnes since 1978 against an estimated demand of over 25 million tonnes. The states's cement quotas have been slashed by 30 to 40 per cent during the last three years'.[65]

A member of the Planning Commission, Mohammed Fazal, bewailed that while financial institutions had provided funds to create 16 million tonnes of steel, and production in 1981 was expected to be 8.5 million tonnes, the huge premiums got by stockists and processors was paid by the poor people. The goal of equal distribution of wealth can hardly be achieved while such imbalances continue.[66] In electrical energy too, the performance so far has been disappointing. The The slippage in terms of new capacity by states till October 1981 was over 5,000 mw, according to a central government estimate. The slippage in commissioning new power projects in 1980-81 was 32 per cent and that in 1981-2 would be 22 per cent of the targets. The central finance minister, R. Venktaraman, seriously doubted if the states could make up the shortfall of 5,000 mw over the next three years of the sixth plan period.[67]

65 *India Today*, September, 1981,
66 *The Pioneer*, 13 October 1981.
67 *The Pioneer*, 7 November, 1981.

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The biggest failure in planning has been in employment. The number of persons completely lacking employment were 10.1 million in 1973 and about 11.2 million in 1976. Apart from these, there are those who are so nominally employed as to lack regular work for even a whole week. In 1973 there were about 18.6 million such persons, and these were expected to swell up to 20.6 million in 1978.[68] According to the planning minister government of India, S.B Chavan, about 42.26 million people would need employment in the country at the end of the sixth five-year plan.[69]

(b) *Causes of Failure*

The foremost reason for lack of achievement in the plans, as indeed in most other spheres, seems to be the human factor of insufficient endeavour. We seem to do everything, but nothing well enough. The next is the failure to limit population. With the figures doubling up in the 34 years of independence, and the prospect of their doubling up again in the twenty odd years left in the century, Indian planning is like the Hindu King, Trishanku, condemned to hang in midair.[70] Tha planners realised this impediment early in 1952 and family planning was adopted as an official pragramme since then. The first plan set apart Rs 14.50 lakh for it, the second Rs 2.16 crore the third Rs 24.86 crore Rs 70.46 crore in the three annual plans and Rs 284.43 crore in the fourth one; Rs 765 crore in the fifth and Rs 1,010 crore in the sixth. The figures of IUD's sterilisations, conventional contraceptives and the medical termination of pregnancy (MTP), too, are impressive. Nevertheless success would obviously be judged by the result. The increases in population in millions are

68 Draft Five Year Plan 1978-83 Government of India, p. 81.

69 *The Pioneer*, 3 December 1981.

70 The King wished to perform a sacrifice which would raise him to heaven and the sage Vishwamitra carried it out. But Indira, the god of the heavens, resented his entry. Ultimately as a compromise it was agreed that Trishanku, an immortal, should hang with his head downwards, and shine among some stars newly called into being by Vishwamitra.

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approximately—1901-11 : 14m; 1911-21 (decrease) 1m; 1921-31 :28 m; 1931-41 :40m; 1941-51 :42m; 1951-61 :78 m, 1961-71: 109 m; 1971-81 : 136 m. Except for the years 1911-21, there has been a steady increase. What is more significant is that from 1951-61, the period in which the family planning programme was officially adopted, the spurt has been steeper. This cannot be explained away by longer life expectancy, for the increase has been only 8 years in the last decade (1971 :46 years; 1981 : 54 years).[71] The decline of the death rate during these years has been only 0.9 per thousand, while the corresponding increase in the population has been about 24.8 per cent. Clearly therefore population control has not been achieved and family planning has failed to make any appreciable impact. While people know about birth control, and to some extent how to practise it, they just will not adopt it. The majority of the people are not family planning minded. Most of them think it to be something unnecessary and against nature. Others abandon it after a half-hearted trial. Very few are inclined to go in for the surer but more drastic measures of MTP, sterilisation and vasectomy. Religious scruples are sometimes too deeply ingrained to be surmounted. Politicians will not touch family planning even with a pair of tongs, however much they talk about it, for it has turned out to be a sure way to unpopularity. Thus democracy makes people in power aware of the cancerous ill of population rise, but at the same time makes them powerless to do anything about it. Family planning is one of those things which can prosper only when the national good begins to be rated above selfish gain. The result of this apathy is that motivation and publicity are seriously lacking. There is lack of effective demand. A scholar who made a study, says:

'For example, at the end of the year 1965-6 there were 2516 units for sterilisation in India and 2353 units for IUD insertion. During that year, 542,000 sterilisations were performed and 804,000 loops were inserted. This implies a rate of 18 sterilisations per clinic per month, and 28 IUD insertions: *about one a day or less.* By contrast, an experienced surgeon with a little

71 Census report of 1681.

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support can easily perform twenty vasectomies in a day. Similariy, a practitioner can easily insert fifty loops in a day, including thorough examination beforehand and adequate explanation or reassurance afterwards. Therefore, present available clinical facilities are grossly unitilized; doctors supposedly engaged full time on family planning work, often quite reasonably spend most of their time on other medical activities; and were the clients forthcoming from the untapped target populations within reach of these facilities, they could easily be accommodated.'[72]

Curiously enough in other cases family planning teams found the task too uphill due to shortage of doctors and the magnitude of the programmes. This, however, seems to be in the earlier stages when enough doctors had not been trained for the work. The difficult conditions in rural areas, like bad roads, inadequate transport, unsanitary conditions, unconcern of the people bordering often on belligerency, lack of electricity and drinking water and so forth, also discouraged medical teams One of them made the following assessment:

'Because of the sheer size of the operation, the difficulties in providing training, accommodation, transport other facilities and the reluctance of doctors and other professional personnel to serve in rural areas, it seems unrealistic to expect that the plan can be implemented generally within the next decade, even if it were given strong and effective support from the central and state governments.[73] Unfortunately it is the villages which most need the programme.

The third great drawback is delays in formulation of the plans and their execution, and also in utilizing resources and foreign aid. Having made a study of some projects Robert C. Repetto's findings are :[74]

72 Robert C. Repetto, *Time in India's Development Programmes*, Harvard Economic Studies, 1971, p. 152.

73 UN Advisory Mission, *Report on Family Planning Program in India*, TAO/IND/48 New York, February 1966. Quotted by R.C. Repetto *Ibid*, p. 130.

74 *Ibid*, pp. 49-52. The projects on which these conclusions were based are: Nangal (1955-6) Gorakhpur (1961-7) and Durgapur—all FCI projects.

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1. There are delays in decision making in projects, particularly those in the public sector. These delayed decisions cover essential features of the undertaking such as size, location, process, output mix, mode of implementation, and financing.
2. Project plans are frequently revised even after execution has started, resulting in loss of time. Costly changes are made afterwards.
3. Delay in procurement, encompassing land acquisition, contract award and approval, important licensing and foreign exchange release, and procurement of scarce domestic material.
4. Inadequate control over schedule in both pre-construction and construction phases of new projects.
5. Lack of synchronisatian in inter-dependent projects, leading to delays in the availability of inputs or in the emergence of markets.

The gestation period of many public sector undertaking were unusually long. From the stage of approval in principle to receipt of the detailed project report it varied from a minimum of 12 to a maximum of 24 months: from the detailed project report to government's approval, from 3 to 18 months; from that to the start of construction, 24 to 45 months; and from commercial production start to full capacity operation, 12 to 63 months.[75] Similar delays occurred in utilisation of foreign assistance. Far example aid authorised in 1958-9 amounting to Rs 302 crore was finally utilised by the year 1964-5. Aid authorised in 1959-60 for 310 crores was utilised in full only seven years after, in 1965-6.[76] The pace of utilisation picked up later, but it was never satisfactory. The same applies to utilisation of the government of India aid to states, and even to the allocations made by the states themselves for various plan and non-plan items. This, in an already impoverished country, can be crippling.

Fourthly there is the huge size of the plans. This has

75 *Ibid.* p. 15 (Table 1: extract from the table).
76 *Ibid*, p. 17 (Table 2: extract from the table).

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risen progressively in outlay out of all proportion to resources. Planning has been based on needs rather than availability of finances, resulting in heavy deficit financing. External assistance has come to be the foreign made borrowed crutch with which Indian Planning hops along. If it is taken away, most of it will perhaps flop. The evil results of non self-reliance in financing have been high prices, inflation, unemployment imbalances and poverty—just those very things planning set out to eradicate! Another drawback is that plan promises—as for instance resource mobilisation—are hardly ever fulfilled. The figures of the sixth plan in 1981-2 show that of the states only Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab, Tripura and West Bengal have reached or surpassed their targets.[77] And when we consider that these are among the smaller states, it becomes obvious that the states have miserably failed to raise their share of the plan resources.

The plans have been erratic, with annual plans intervening. The fourth plan covered the period 1969-74, the fifth plan from 1978-83 and before that could go through, came the sixth from 1980-85. The primary aim has been to develop agriculture and industry, but these can hardly go beyond an optimum limit without electricity, to which the planners gave short shrift. The amounts earmarked for it in rupees were : 1.8 thousand million out of 23.8 thousand million in the first plan, only 7.5 per cent of the outlay ; 3.8 thousand million out of 48 in the second plan, i.e. 7.9 per cent; 10.12 thousand million out of 75, i.e 10.12 per cent in the third plan. In the fourth plan power got only 15.5 per cent out of the total outlay (Rs 244.75 million against Rs 1590.2 million), and out of this only about half of the amount was for actual generation of electricity. The fifth plan increased this to 22.7 per cent (Rs 1575 million against Rs 6938 million) and the sixth to about 19.7 per cent (Rs 1926 5 per cent million against Rs 9,750 million).

Thus even though there was progressive increase in the amount allotted to electricity it was not given sufficient importance till the fourth plan, and by that time the population rise offset the additional amount given to it. Besides only part of

77 The *Pioneer*, 25 October 1981.

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this was for actual generation, and even in that the full capacity was never generated. Similar was the case with irrigation. Water supplies available through canals or tubewells remains uncertain. Seepage losses are about 40 per cent of the total flow between the distributary head and the cultivator's fields. Canals rarely work at full supply, and the flow through distributaries seldom averages two-thirds of capacity, even in peak seasons. Fields away from the outlet take much longer to irrigate than fields near it. Enough and timely information is not given to the farmers about the time schedule of releases of water Cultivators often do not get water when they really need it. Tubewells remain famished of power. The result is that even now large areas are entirely at the mercy of the monsoons.

Finally the pattern of planning is top-heavy and loosely related to physical achievement. Data for the plans is collected at the district level in states and from departmental officers, and it is largely theoretical. Though the idea of planning at grass roots level is gathering ground, it still remains purely a concept. The plans are mere repetitions of the ones before with just a change of figures. The same applies to physical targets. There is imperfect relation between these and expenditure on them, with the result that no clear idea of benefits accruing is obtained. There is a tendency to assess achievement in terms of money spent rather than in real and factual on-the-spot gains.

(c) *Possible Remedies*

It might be more profitable to have annual plans, as indeed has been done in between the five-years ones, in order to make them more practical and realistic. With prices rising as swiftly as they are, a long term plan soon becomes obsolete in terms of financing. Annual plans will open themselves to closer reviews and revisions. Besides progress will necessarily be watched more frequently.

Though it is always better to aim higher than one hopes to achieve, moderate plans based on internal and real resources should work out better than those using a lot of external assistance and indulging in deficit financing. In order to correlate physical achievement to expenditure and to ensure that the

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money spent actually reaches the beneficiaries, it might be useful to carry out periodical short verrification drives in areas chosen at random.

There is hardly any worthwhile assessment of plan requirements by the central government in the states. The modus operandi seems to be that various discussions are held between the concerned officers and finally by the ministers, before the plans are finalised. Thus the eloquence of advocacy reigns supreme rather than the actual requirements of individual states. The plans are built from top to bottom, instead of in the rational order from bottom to the top.

A simplification of procedures seems to be needed to speed up projects, as for example in the preparation of project reports, calling for tenders, obtaining essential components and so forth. A time bound programme should be strictly enforced to save costs on re-projecting due to increase in prices or faulty planning. Quite often execution of projects is so much delayed that they have ultimately to be carried out at much higher cost. Rigid rules which obstruct spending or necessitate it so swiftly as to result in wastage, should be done away with. It is usual for funds to be released late in March (the financial year end) with the stipulated condition that they are spent within March itself ! This is of course an impossibility; and since the Auditor General takes notice of spendings beyond March, much of the money released is surrendered. This is almost a continual occurrence, year after year and a serious impediment to planning.

In the field of agriculture two great hindrances are small holdings and uncertain or no irrigation. For the first the answer may be in co-operative farming. But experience has shown that in India co-operation does not work. A law of primogeniture would perhaps be too harsh a measure. The only way out seems to be absorption of the surplus men in small scale and village industries to remove pressure from the land. But before such industries can succeed they will need more mechanisation and modernisation.

Electrical energy is the heart of both agriculture and industry. The only way for a farmer (provided he can afford it) to have an assured irrigation, is by his own private tubewell. Electricity

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and diesel, therefore, are needed in large and constant supply.

Finally we come to population control without which there can be no progress and no planning. If electricity and irrigation are the heart of planning, population control is its very soul. With the population shooting sky-high, 'India' as Tyson aptly puts it, is 'rather like a man running up a descending escalator—just about able to hold his own.'[78] Family planning has two aspects—the interest of the state, and the private aspect which concerns the individual. The distinction should be clearly understood. Failure to appreciate this was the main cause of the discontent and often violent opposition following the family planning drive of 1976. The state has the right to ask its citizens to limit their families to a reasonable size, because it provides and pays for public amenities like roads, schools, hospitals and so forth. Obviously such amenities cannot be unlimited. But *how* the citizen restricts his family to the number desired by the state, is his domain. Thus the choice of method is the individual's right not the state's. During the emergency these two domains unfortunately got confused. The government began to insist on targets of vasectomy. Over-zealous workers began to force people to get themselves vasectomised. It was an encroachment by the state on a domain which was strictly private. Hence the trouble. Even the disincentives were those which hit private rights, such as holding arms licenses, the supply of essential commodities, withholding salaries i.e. payment for work taken. Yet a way to make people limit their families must be found out, or India can have no future. One method which should work is the imposition of a proportionate punitive taxation on incomes for families beyond a fixed limit. The taxation can be graded, say 5 per cent for over two children, 10 per cent for over three, 20 per cent for more than four, and so on. This measure will have two advantages. It will act as a strong deterrent to large families. At the same time if an additional child does come, the state gets a contribution to the extra cost it will have to incur on the child's welfare. Since there is no compulsion

78 Geoffery Tyson, *Nehru the Years of Power*, Pall Mall Press, 1966, p. 44.

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about any particular method of family planning in this scheme, it is not likely to create any discontent. Publicity about family planning is miserably lacking, particularly during the last three or four years. The state too seems to have woefully failed in its duty towards population control, despite realising its vital importance. Population rise today is like a big hole in the Indian ship of state. It is no use improving and decorating this ship with new trappings and facilities. If the hole is not plugged soon, it will sink.

In the final analysis, when everything has been said and done it is the human factor which decides success and failure—the will to work, the will to progress, and to strive for, if not to achieve, perfection.

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9

Foreign Affairs and Foreign Policy

'What is our foreign policy ? Some people take the word "non-alignment" and think that is the whole of our foreign policy. In a way it is not the word "non-alignment", but what non-alignment stands for, namely that we believe in independently judging all issues. We do not wtsh to be tied to any group or to any country.'

Indira Gandhi : 31 August 1970

'India will not sell her soul for a bowl of rice. She is no more willing to accept Soviet or Chinese domination of herself or her neighbours than she is willing to accept the return of western colonial rulers.'

Chester Bowles

After more than seven centuries of Muslim and British domination, India at last was free again, and for the first time after many years it could fashion its own foreign policy. Nehru, who guided India's external relations while being its prime minister, was for a policy of non-alignment. In a way the principle had already been broken, for India had joined the Commonwealth but there was still the question whether she should align herself with one of the power blocs or stay away. There were two aspects of foreign policy. One was the relations which India ought to maintain with the world powers like US and the Soviet, and the others her attitude towards her neighbours. Narrating King Rama's advice to his sons and nephews about the

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policy one should follow, poet Keshavadasa had said :

'He should wage war
with kingdoms next to his,
maintain peace with those lying further,
and exchange gifts
with those on the outmost limit.
The king who organises
his kingdom with others, thus,
right till Sindh;
sleeps the sleep of contentment'.[1]

Nehru, however, chose the policy of panch sheel or the five principles of peace, in so far as India's neighbours were concerned leaving *them* to follow King Rama's advice. So whenever war broke out, whether with China or Pakistan, it was they who struck. The five principles of peace were first enunciated by Nehru as the main points of agreement between India and Communist China over Tibet. They were set forth in a joint declaration by Nehru and Chou En-lai. They were :

1. Mutual respect for territorial intergrity and sovereignty.
2. Non-aggression
3, Non interference in internal affairs
4. Equality and mutual benefit
5. Peaceful co-existence

The principles of panch sheel could only be worked out by mutual co-operation of the countries which agreed to it. It couldn't be a one sided affair. As it turned out, the goodwill remained only on the Indian side and soon disillusion attended it.

In a declaration of India's wider foreign policy in respect of world powers and blocs, Nehru spelled out non-alignment. He believed that with many internal problems still to be settled, the time had not yet arrived for a vigorous foreign policy. 'We are not, frankly speaking, influential enough to affect international

1 Keshavadasa, *Ramachandrika*, 39-35 (Trans. author's).

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events very much' he said.[2] He was not in favour of offending others : 'It is not our purpose to offend others or to come into conflict with others'.[3] The choice of a neutral 'straightforward honest...and independent policy;' was the best, he thought even though it might be only 'the lesser evil'.[4] Another reason for maintaining non-alignment was that unless one had put his own house in order, it was pointless meddling with others. Curiously enough that was Patel's view also, despite the fundamental differences between the two great leaders. On the occasion of Nehru's visit to the US in 1949, the Sardar remarked to an English acquaintance, 'We have to get on with the job here. Of what use is the fanfare of a trip through America with speeches and all ?'[5] 'Inspite of being minister in charge of external affairs, (I am) not interested in external affairs, so much as internal affairs at the present moment. External affairs will follow internal affairs. Indeed there is no basis for external affairs if internal affairs go wrong.'[6] Indira Gandhi, too, was of the same opinion'. 'Foreign policy' she said 'cannot be divorced from a country's internal policy'.[7] Non-alignment has had many critics, but it certainly paid off, particularly in the beginning, for it enabled India to receive aid from both the rival power blocs of US and the Soviet. This was one of the objects of non-alignment, as Nehru himself said : 'We want the help of other countries; we are going to have it and we are going to get it too in a large measure—I am not aware of this having been denied to us to any large extent. Even in accepting economic help, or in getting political help, it is not a wise policy to put all your eggs in one basket. Nor should one get help at the cost of one's self-respect....Therefore, purely from the point of view of opportunism, if you like, a straightforward honest policy is the best.'[8]

2 Speech in the Constituent Assembly, New Delhi, 8 March 1948. *Nehru* (ed.) Dorothy Norman, Asia 1965, vol.2, p. 381.
3 *Ibid*, 384.
4 *Ibid*, p. 385.
5 Michael Brecher, *Nehru*, Oxford, 1959, pp. 391-2.
6 *Nehru* (ed.) Dorothy Norman, Asia, 1965, vol. 2, p. 384.
7 *India*, Rupa and Co., 1975, p. 131.
8 *Nehru* (ed.) Dorothy Norman, Asia, 1965, p. 385.

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Panch sheel was accepted by China, being embodied in the preamble of the treaty regarding Tibet. Burma, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union approved of these principles. Within a year more than thirty countries had accepted panch sheel in some form or the other. Nehru believed that if countries of the world accepted it, this would 'go a long way to put an end to the fears and apprehensions which cast dark shadows over the world'.[9]

Non-alignment means of course, refraining from alignment with any military bloc, but it does not really mean neutrality. Even while remaining non-aligned views may be expressed on international issues. Explaining this Nehru once said in parliament 'It is a question of trying to do what we think right, and in the process of doing it—and that is part of doing it—trying to be friendly and co-operative with countries, even though we may disagree with them, because that is the basis of our approach, a friendly and co-operative approach; but then we may express our disagreement, but always in friendly terms.'[10] For example India condemned the invasion of Suez by the British and French as 'naked aggression' in 1956. She condemned Soviet intervention in Hungary and the entry of North Korean troops into South Korea.[11] Nehru made the distinction clear in many of his speeches. In one of these he said ;

'Some people use the word "neutral" in regard to India's policy. I do not like that word at all, having myself been in the past, perhaps even now to some extent, not exactly a negative individual but a positive individual working for positive causes, working with all the vigour and strength that I could command for those causes, and having, if I may say so with all respects, a certain contempt for a neutral person who has no views at all...we are uncommitted to military blocs; but the important fact is that we are committed to various policies, various urges, various objectives and various principles'.[12]

9 *India Since 1947* (ed.) A. Chakrabarti, Allied, 1967, p. 275.

10 *Documents on Indian Affairs* (ed.) G. Kumar and V.K. Arora, Asia, 1965, p. 367.

11 *India Since 1947* (ed.) A Chakrabarti, Allied, 1967, p. 289.

12 Jawaharlal Nehru, *India's Foreign policy, Sept. 1964—April 1961*, Publications Division, Government of India, 1961, p. 85.

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India and China

The first rude shock to panch sheel and non-alignment came ironically from China, from whom it was initially conceived. India and China have a common frontier running along the Himalayan ranges for about 2,000 miles. Except for Kashmir which adjoins the Sinkiang province of China, most of this frontier lies between India and Tibet. The Chinese, however, had been claiming Tibet to be part of China, as early as 1913-14 when the frontier dispute between British India, Tibet and China was settled at the Simla conference ; and in fact a note appended to the text of the convention said 'It is understood by the high contracting parties that Tibet forms part of the Chinese territory.'[13] The Simla conference had decided the boundary which follows the contour of the Assam Himalayas between Bhutan and Burma (a length of more than 700 miles, known as the North East Frontier Agency or NEFA) by the Mc Mahon Line (after Sir A.H.Mc Mahon foreign secretary to the government of India and chairman of the conference). The Chinese were represented at this conference by Ivan Chen who initialled the draft convention and the map showing the boundary, but said that 'he had to await definite authority from his government before the convention was formally signed and sealed.' Later he announced that his government had disavowed his action.[14] None the less the Mc Mahon line had continued to form the frontiers between the three countries ever since. After partition, when India became independent, the Tibetans thought this an opportunity to extend their domains, and asked for the return of territories 'such as Sayul and Walong in the direction of Pemakoe, Lonag, Lopa, Mon, Bhutan, Sikkim, Darjeeling and others on this side of the river Ganges, and Lowo, Ladakh etc. up to the boundary of Yarkhim.'[15] Such a claim could hardly be conceded, for it would bring the Tibetan boundary right down to the Ganges river, and a polite reply

13 Dorothy Woodman, *Himalayan Frontiers*, Barrie and Rockcliff, 1969 p. 182 *op. cit* (Hereafter referred to as 'HF').

14 HF, 172.

15 HF, 214 *op. cit.*

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was sent saying that India assumed that Tibet would continue relations on the existing basis until new agreements were mutually reached. Chiang Kai-shek, the Chinese head of state also sent a note asking where his country stood vis a vis the new Indian government. He looked with suspicion on a Tibetan delegation to Delhi in 1948, for from the Chinese point of view Tibet was part of China. On 4 January 1949 Peking surrendered to the communists and on 1 October Mao Tse-tung proclaimed the Chinese People's Republic. Mao declared that his Republic 'would wage the war of liberation to the very end, and liberate all the territory of China.' Though he did not say it in so many words, the hint was towards Tibet. As early as 1 January 1950 the liberation of Tibet was stated to be one of the main tasks of the liberation army,[16] yet the Indian government seemed to be oblivious of the gravity of the situation. It was somehow hoped that China would keep hands off Tibet, though how this hope was generated in view of China's categorical assertion, it is difficult to see. The mists of danger seemed to fade away before the sun of Indo-Chinese friendship, and the slogan of the hour was 'Hindi-Chini *bhai bhai*!' (Indians and Chinese are brothers). The Sino-Tibetan Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet was signed in Peking on 23 May 1951. One of the clauses was that 'the Tibetan people shall return to the big family of the Motherland —the People's Republic of China'.[17] Even then India's diplomats thought nothing of it. The foreign press, however, prophetically predicted 'within one month the Chinese communists will control all passes through the Himalayas from Tibet into India and Nepal.'[18] In October 1954 Nehru visited Peking and in 1956 Chou En-lai paid a return visit to Delhi. In between in April 1955 there was the Bandung meet—the biggest gathering of Afro-Asian countries since the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi in 1947, during which Nehru and Chou were as close together as could be. While returning to Delhi from the Bhakra-Nangal Dam, Chou had said to Nehru that he had

16 HL, 217 *op. cit.*

17 HF, 222.

18 *New York Times*, 28 August 1951.

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never heard of the McMahon Line, but because it was an accomplished fact and because of the friendly relations between India, China and Burma, 'the Chinese government were of the opinion that they should give recognition to it.'[19]

Soon after, in October 1957, the Chinese announced the completion of the Yehcheng Gartok road, known as the Sinkiang-Tibet highway, but they kept the route secret. This road went across that part of Ladakh which for centuries formed part of India and had been accepted as such by China in a treaty of 1842. In November 1958 the Chinese detained an Indian patrol. In 1959 the Tibetans revolted and Dalai Lama the Buddhist head, fled to India, and was given asylum in Mussoorie. A Peking note made him out to be a Chinese rebel who had been abducted to India. The note also called on India to recognise US as China's main enemy. By September 1959 China was laying claim to almost 40,000 square miles of Indian territory, and even showing it as Chinese in the maps prepared by it. The negotiations between India and China were long and tortuous, but the dispute was mainly about five points. The first was Bara Hoti, a trans-Himalayan grazing ground, where herdsmen moved their goats as the seasons changed. Though both China and India had agreed to keep away from Bara Hoti, Chinese officials arrived there on 29 June 1958. This started a chain of aggression. Indian officials likewise came, and then Chinese soldiers The second point of dispute was Khurnak Fort on the Pangong Lake. The Chinese accused India of sending troops there, though it was Chinese territory. The third dispute was about Aksai Chin, where, as Nehru said, 'not a blade of grass grew.' It was a dreary plateau 'reached by a pass of 19,400 feet and itself varying from 19,000 and 18,000 feet in elevation at the level of the plain.'[20] Chinese troops claimed to have crossed into Tibet through this plateau, and it was here that they built their network of roads. India claimed Aksai Chin as her territory on the basis of historical evidence. The fourth dispute was about the Lohit valley

19 HF, 229 *op. cit.* (White Paper I, Nehru to Chou En-lai, 14 December 1958, p. 49).

20 Dr Gayley's description, quoted in HF, 66.

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which was claimed both by India as well as China. Finally there was the Chinese map appearing in *China Pictorial* (issue no. 95) which included as Chinese territory (a) four of the five divisions of India's NEFA, (b) some area of the north of Uttar Pradesh, (c) large areas of eastern Ladakh which were part of Jammu and Kashmir, (d) the entire Tashigong area of eastern Bhutan and, (e) a considerable part of the territory of north-east Bhutan.[21]

In April 1960 Nehru and Chou En-lai met for five days in Delhi but were unable to resolve their differences. In May 1962 Peking announced an agreement with Pakistan 'to locate and align their common frontiers.' Chinese intrusions into Indian territory south of the Mc Mahon Line continued. On 12 October 1962 Nehru announced that the Indian army had been given orders to push the Chinese back from places where they had violated the Mc Mahon Line. The very next day China said 'the Indian aggressors must bear full responsibility for their crimes.' The Indian chargé d'affairs in Peking was handed a note which accused India of 'frenzied attacks' of its troops and its refusal to negotiate. A full scale invasion in Ladakh, and all along the Mc Mahon Line, was launched by the Chinese.

When Indian MP's had expressed their anxiety about the state of India's defences, Nehru had told them 'At no time since independence have our defence forces been in better condition, in finer fettle, and with a background of greater industrial production in the country to help them than today.' Later he had said that the Chinese were getting 'nervous and apprehensive at our growing strength.' The defence minister, Krishna Menon, announced in parliament that 'the morale of our forces has never been higher.'

None the less Indian defences seemed to crumble before the Chinese attack. By mid-November Ladakh was lost and the Chinese were firmly established in NEFA. Walong fell, and Chinese forces were near Tezpur in Assam. They could have easily captured the whole of Assam north of the Brahmaputra river and the valuable oil fields to the south. But with the same

21 HF, 233.

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suddenness with which the invasion had started, the Chinese announced on 21 November a cease-fire, declaring their intention to begin a withdrawal on 1 December to positions in the NEFA and in Ladakh 20 kilometres behind the actual line of control existing in November 1959 and in November 1962 respectively. Chou En-lai wrote to Nehru that pending a peaceful settlement for which talks should be held, he hoped India would respect the line of control along the whole Sino-Indian border. Each side should withdraw 20 kilometres from this line and disengage. Chou circulated his cease-fire terms to the heads of state of the Afro-Asian bloc, and warned Delhi that the Chinese government reserved the right to 'strike back in self-defence,' if the proposal were rejected.

Indian losses amounted to 3,080 killed and large numbers wounded and missing. The loss in prestige (*izzat*) was still greater, for having taken a solid beating, India was in no position to bargain. Nevertheless in a way the cease-fire was most opportune, for had the Chinese pushed on their arms it would have been quite damaging for India. Besides India had not formally signed any agreement on the border issue and could still keep her claims open to the territory overrun by China. The invasion also created interest in US and Britain, inasmuch as any large scale intrusion of China into India would seriously upset the balance of power, and they saw the need of strengthening its defences. In the middle of December a conference of non-aligned nations was called at Colombo and Mrs Bandarnaike, prime minister of Ceylon, took peace proposals to Peking, though nothing came of them.

China tried to exploit the situation created in 1965 when Pakistan was at war with India, and demanded that all military installations on or over the China-Sikkim boundary should be dismantled.

Before passing on to the subsequent relations between India and China, it might be interesting to consider what could be the possible motives for the sudden attack and the equally abrupt withdrawal. Tyson gives five reasons, viz. India's attitude to Tibet and the Dalai Lama ; the Chinese belief that the Mc Mahon Line was foisted by the British on China ; having built a road across Ladakh secretly theo ccupation of the area

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was a natural corollary ; China's desire to assert its might, and to wreck India's economy.[22] The Chinese had a lot of experience of India's hilly frontier, perhaps more than Indians had themselves. Chou had visited India frequently and the Chinese spy system had a high degree of efficiency. So they knew all about the weaknesses of the Indian position, and saw it was a good opportunity of taking advantage of it. The brief war was not without gains to China. On the face of it the Chinese offer to withdraw 20 kilometres behind the line of control as it existed on 7 November 1959, seemed to be generous. But it turned out that the 'line' they were referring to was not different from the extreme line they claimed. Thus they retained most of their new gains on the west of the Aksai Chin road in Ladakh. Of course they were rattled by the puffed up utterances of Indian politicians, all the more because they realised how weakly backed up they were. But Chou would hardly act in anger. He was too cool and calculating for that. He carefully weighed the advantages and struck. And when he had achieved them, his purpose accomplished, he made a dramatic withdrawal, as if to tell the world 'Look, we could have made a grand conquest. But it is not *we* who had hostile intentions. We were only guarding what was our own'. Warning India, the Chinese note said that if India broke the cease-fire, we can 'strike back in self defence. . . .The people of the world will then seen even more clearly who is peace-loving and who is bellicose...' It was a complete distortion of facts, but it was doubtless good diplomacy. China would of course not have proceeded deeper into Indian territory. Not that it couldn't. But Chou knew that the American-British bloc would never have sat idly watching. And he did not want to get his country involved in what might well turn into a world war. The reasons for the Indian defeat are pretty obvious. Political promotion which undermined the morale of the army officers, poor and cumbersome equipment, lack of experience of fighting at such a great height, poor military intelligence and communication (China had all the good roads), and internal rivalry, were some of the causes. But the greatest

22 Geoffrey Tyson, *Nehru the Years of Power*, Pall Mall Press, 1966, pp. 110-11.

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shortcoming was lack of preparedness and misplaced trust. Indian leaders turned sentimental and nostalgic at the mention of the Chinese. So much so that when it was put to the Indian prime minister that Tibet should be a buffer state he exclaimed 'A buffer between whom?' China's Tibet invasion evoked no response in India. Till the Chinese troops entered Indian territory every Indian leader disbelieved that the Chini *bhai* would never shed his *bhai's* blood. Chou's smile was infectious, but it had the Shakespearian deceptiveness of having a dagger in it.[23] The Indian defeat was as much a failure of Indian statesmanship as of Indian arms.

The Indo-Chinese war created bitter memories, but left the border issue unsettled. Having occupied Tibet and quite a bit of Indian territory, relations between the two countries remained as explosive as ever. The British had wisely followed a vigorous frontier policy and had succeeded in so strengthening the buffer states on the north, like Afghanistan, Tibet, Nepal and the like, that they could never come under Russian or Chinese influence. The abandonment of a strong frontier policy was a mistake. To make things worse China has always been more inclined towards Pakistan than India, and has her covetous eyes fixed on Nepal. Even at the height of the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965, China threatened to attack Sikkim. In 1961 a mutual treaty was signed between China and Nepal by which the Chinese acquired the right to construct the Kodari-Kathmandu road linking Tibet and Nepal. In 1967, although the two countries were at peace, the Chinese Red Guards attacked Indian diplomats in Peking because they alleged that one of them was found photographing a prohibited military area, and another 'was an out and out spy.' The diplomats were ordered to leave China, but before they left they were given a good beating at the airport by Red Guards. This triggered off a reaction in India and things were so bad that it appeared diplomatic relations between the two countries would be severed. Fortunately better sense prevailed and tempers cooled down. The Chinese apparently encouraged the Naxalites in India to create disorder and terrorism, for

23 *Macbeth*, ii. iii. 145.

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some of them were found to have been trained by them. The *People's Daily* wrote in 1967:

'The Indian revolution must take the road of relying on the peasants, establishing, base areas in the countryside, persisting in protracted armed struggle, and using the countryside to encircle and finally capture the cities. This is the Mao Tse-tung road..... Armed struggle is the only correct road for the Indian revolution; there is no other road whatsover. Such trashism as "Gandhism" ; "the parliamentary road," and like are opium used by the Indian ruling classes to dope the Indian people.',[24]

In 1971 when there were renewed hostilities between India and Pakistan on the Bangla Desh issue, China again openly supported Pakistan. Premier Chou En-lai wrote to General Yahya Khan, assuring Pakistan that 'should the Indian expansionists dare to luanch aggression against Pakistan, the Chinese government and people will, as always, firmly support the Pakistan government and people in their just struggle to safeguard the state's sovereignty and national independence.'

India's relations with China have always remained uncertain and unpredictable. In 1972 India's foreign minister, Swaran Singh, said in the Lok Sabha:

'I cannot see any escape from the ultimate emergence of a situation where the people of India and the people of China would live in peace and as good neighbours.....There is no doubt that relations between the two countries deteriorated very much; there was an armed conflict between the countries. After that also, the general attitude of China has not been one of expressing any friendly feeling or friendship towards India. In fact, we have noticed....their support to certain disruptive elements in India. There is also their propaganda line of trying to project a picture of India as a disintegrating India, highlighting our troubles either on the labour front or on the front of industrial production; this unfortunately has

24 *People's Daily*, 5 July 1967. Quoted by P. Tharyan, *India the Critical Decade after Nehru*, Sterling, 1974, p. 172.

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been the attitude of China.'[25]

Although India had supported China's admission to the United Nations, China refused to recognise Bangladesh and vetoed her admission to the United Nations. Right through the Bangladesh bid for liberation, China was giving Pakistan assistance to suppress it. The main contention between India and China is of course about the boundary. China does not recognise that the boundary has been fixed by Mc Mohan Line or by any other line. India's stand was set forth in a note sent to China in 1960 which said:

'The Government of China contend that the Sino-Indian boundary has not been formally delimited and in support of that contention allege that the boundary has not been determined by treaties and agreements. The Government of India cannot accept this contention. The Sino-Indian boundary based on custom and tradition follows natural features, and for the major part this customary and traditional boundary is also confirmed by treaty and agreement....the Government of India cannot agree that negotiations have to be conducted to reach new agreements for the fresh determination of the Sino-Indian boundary'.[26]

The divergence on the thinking of the two nations is on a basic point, and therefore acute if not insurmountable. India is for recognition of what it considers has been determined. China refuses to acknowledge that anything has been determined and wishes for negotiation. There is apparently no lack of goodwill on both sides. In a reply given to Nehru's welcome speech Chou En-lai had said in 1960:

'The friendship between the peoples of China and India is everlasting. Our two peoples have been friendly to each other over thousands of years in the past. We shall remain friendly to each other for thousands and tens of thousands of years to come. History will continue to bear out that the great

25 *Documents on India's Foreign Policy* 1972 (ed.) S. Kumar Macmillan, 1975, p. 260.

26 *Documents on Indian Affairs* 1960 (ed.) G. Kumar and V.K. Arora, Asia, 1965 Indian Council of World Affairs. pp. 472-8 (White Paper 3:1960 pp. 85-6).

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solidarity of the one thousand million people of our two countries canuot be shaken by any force on earth.'[27] (History, nevertheless, did not bear this out).

Indira Gandhi wrote: 'We hope that some day China will appreciate that co-operative and friendly relations between the 560 million people of India and the 700 million people of China are in our mutual interest.'[28] Goodwill, however, is not enough. Unless there is sincerity of purpose and a small area of agreement (howsoever small it might be), a solution would be difficult. India is at times needlessly voluble, and China touchy. Recently the *People's Daily* criticised the statement of the Indian external affairs minister, Narasimha Rao, in parliament that China had occupied 14,500 square miles of Indian territory in the Ladakh region. It said 'China has never occupied an inch of Indian territory...Mr Rao's statement is unfavourable for a reasonable settlement of the border problem and is also unfavourable to the maintenance of a friendly atmosphere created by the two sides not long ago to improve relations between the countries. The Chinese people cannot but find this highly regrettable.' It is to be seen if any headway can be made in these circumstances in the border talks which opened at Beijing (China) in December 1981. The main problem to be resolved in these talks was the com plicated border issue. According to India, China was still illegally occupying 37,550 square kilometres of Indian territory in the west, and Pakistan had illegally ceded another 5,180 square kilometres. China on the other hand claimed 59,570 square kilometres territory in the west and about 233,000 square kilometres on the east. India agreed not to insist that solution of the border problem be a pre-condition for normalisation talks, though its stand was that normal relations cannot be established between the two countries unless the border issue is resolved. The Indian external affairs minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao, observed after the talks that there were fairly

27 *Ibid*, p. 496 (Indian Information 3:8, May 15, 1960, p. 290).

28 Article for the October 1972 issue of Foreign Affairs, *India*, Rupa and Co, 1975 (The Speeches and Reminiscences of Indira Gandhi Prime Minister of India) pp. 210-11.

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wide differences between India and China on the border issue.'[29] The inevitable conclusion is that the talks, the first in 20 years on this issue, failed to make headway, and the undecided frontier remains as disputed as ever.

India and Pakistan

Ever since Pakistan came into being, Kashmir has remained an obsession with her. After its accession to India the logical corollary was that it had become part of the Indian Union. But Pakistan never really recognised this, and the matter became complicated by the cease-fire just when Indian troops had almost driven out the Pakistani supported tribals; and the subsequent agreement by India to a plebiscite and reference to the Security Council.

In January 1960 a minister's level conference was held at Lahore, Rawalpindi and Delhi to discuss the West Pakistan-India border question. There were disputes about some territories on which the Radcliffe award was not clear. As a result of the decisions, Pakistan gave up its claim to Chak Ladheke and India to the three villages of Theh Sarja Marja, Rakh Hardit Singh and Pathanke. About the Hussainwala headworks it was decided that the boundary would be the district boundary between Ferozpur and Lahore districts. Similarly a settlement of the disputed boundary in respect of the Suleimanke headworks was finalised. Top priority was to be given to the demarcation of the boundary between West Pakistan and Punjab (India). The Kutch-Sindh boundary dispute was, however, left unsettled, and this was soon to create trouble.

The Rann of Kutch Conflict

The disputed area, a low lying one, close to the Arabian Sea, falls between Sindh which became part of Pakistan, and Gujarat state which acceded to India. It is skirted by a creek which floods it at high tide converting it into a kind seasonal

29 *The Pioneer*, 18 December 1981 (PTI).

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sea, while at other times it remains a stretch of marshy land. India's view was that it was marsh land, for water filled the depression only at high tide, and thus part of Gujarat which had now come over to India. Pakistan considered it to be an inland sea between the two countries, and by the law applying to international frontiers claimed half share of it. The 1960 conference had merely said about this : 'Both countries agreed to collect data in respect of the dispute regarding Kutch-Sind boundary and discussions will be held later with a view to arriving at a settlement.'[30] No discussions were held, and in fact the matter wasn't given any great importance. But in January 1965 Pakistan was found to have intruded a mile and a half into Indian territory. Indian protests were ignored, and instead troops of the Pakistani army stormed a new post India had set up towards the Indian side. The post was lost, but soon after recaptured. On 11 April 1965 Pakistan launched a bigger attack, this time claiming in addition 3,500 square miles of Indian territory. After about ten day's fighting Pakistan offered cease-fire with talks after, to resolve the issue. India agreed, provided the question of evacuation of Kanjarkot, which the Paks had occupied, would be considered at the talks. Pakistan took this to be a pre-condition to negotiation, and the fighting continued, the heaviest being at Point 84, an Indian position lying between Biar Bet and Chhad Bet. An attack on Biar Bet was repulsed, but renewed again by the Pak forces. The Indian garrison withdrew. The Pakistani troops did not advance beyond Biar Bet and, except for occasional artillery fire, fighting ceased.

In the meantime Britain was getting concerned about the situation because of the close links existing between Pakistan, China and Indonesia. Both Britain and America had commercial interests in south-east Asia. They wanted to halt China's influence there and this could be accomplished only if India and Pakistan came closer. Between India and Pakistan, however, the British favoured Pakistan more. This was admitted by the *Times* which wrote 'It was an Indian axiom—not devoid of

30 *Documents on Indian Affairs 1960* (ed.) Kumar and Arora, Asia, 1965, p. 542.

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truth—that the British tended to be pro-Pakistan and anti-Indian'. On the initiative of Harold Wilson, the British prime minister, a solution was arrived at after prolonged negotiation, which was approved by the governments of India and Pakistan on 30 June 1965. According to this, cease-fire was to come into operation from the morning of 1 July 1966. The status quo as existing on 1 January 1965 was restored and Pakistani forces would withdraw beyond what India considered to be the international border between Kutch and Sind. Pakistan would vacate Biar Bet and Point 84 and dismantle its post at Kanjarkot. India would withdraw its forces from Sadar Post and Vigokot. Two month's time was fixed for the withdrawals to be completed. Indian and Pakistani police could keep on patrolling the tracks they used to, before 1 January 1965. The agreement provided for talks afterwards regarding Pakistan's claims and if necessary a reference to the judicial tribunal as envisaged in the Indo-Pakistan Agreement of 1960.

India Pakistan War

The cease-fire and the Kutch agreement proved to be just a temporary respite in Indo-Pak hostility. Only about a month later news came through that Pakistani infiltrators were entering Kashmir from across the cease-fire line and the international boundary line of Jammu. One writer who takes the Pakistan angle says 'The cease-fire line in Kashmir is a highly artificial line, with plenty of openings for incidents and controversies. It is not surprising therefore if some Kashmiri nationals from Azad Kashmir slipped across the cease-fire line to help their brethren in the struggle against Indian rule...India maintained about 150,000 troops and police in Kashmir. How could a few hundred or even a few thousand "outsiders" cause such havoc and revolt within forty-eight hours in an area of about 50,000 square miles if the people were not involved?'[31] The mode of entry of these 'helpers of their brethren' was strange indeed. They came stealthily in twos and threes carefully

31 G.W. Choudhury *Pakistan's Relations with India*, Meenakshi Prakashan, 1971, p. 252.

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taking cover in ravines and in desolate mountain tracks. Their task was to de troy bridges, disrupt communication, capture radio stations and airfields, raid army supply depots and police outposts and kill troops and VIPs. It was all in fulfilment of a 'master plan' for Kashmir evolved by Pakistan, of which Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, its foreign minister, spoke. The infiltrators were trained from before under 'British and Chinese inspiration, in guerilla warfare and they were armed with automatic weapons. They were not in mere hundreds, but almost 20,000 of them. Documents recovered from them said they were the 'Gibraltar Forces' who would 'storm Srinagar, capture its airfield, take over its radio station and secretariat, liquidate all the Kashmir leaders and install a Revolutionary Council for Kashmir.'[32] Thereafter the Azad government would ostensibly ask Pakistan for military aid. Thus it was not such an innocuous incident as Professor Choudhury maintains. Unfortunately for Pakistan the expected did not happen. The people of Kashmir had not forgotten how Pakistani raiders had ravaged their territory in 1947, and they feared the same cruelties would be repeated. Instead of the '*bhai bhai*' attitude which the infiltrators hoped for, they found themselves speedily bundled into police stations for questioning. Military outposts were alerted. India's prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri said in a broadcast to the nation :

'If Pakistan has any idea of annexing any part of our territories by force she should think afresh. I want to state categorically that force will be met with force and aggression against us will never be allowed to succeed. I also want to tell our brothers and sisters in Kashmir that the people of the entire country stand solidly with them, ready to make any sacrifice for the defence of our freedom.'

Pakistan's move was, in fact, a disguised attack, which fizzled out because of lack of response from the people of Kashmir. The offensive, in a sense, had already been taken. India replied by sending its troops beyond the cease-fire line to cut off the source of infiltrators. They reached Tithwal, but were strictly

32 Bhagat Vats, *Foreign Intrigue Against India*, Aman Publishers, 1967, p. 113.

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forbidden to take Muzaffarabad. On 1 September they occupied Haji Pir Pass through which most of the Pakistani infiltrators had been entering Kashmir. The action was mainly a defensive one in order to halt the Pakistani operation. But having failed in its object, Pakistan launched a full scale attack against India, occupying two posts Dewa and Chhamb about seven miles deep in Indian territory. Queerly Pakistan called this 'a purely defensive measure, taken when it had no choice.' Nevertheless this 'defensive' action involved a hundred Pakistan tanks, infantry divisions, and heavy artillery fire, supported by an air attack by Sabre jets. In order to create a diversion, Indian forces launched a three-pronged attack across the Punjab border. Within a week the Pakistanis were desperately fighting to defend Lahore and Sialkot. The Indian army was almost at the suburbs of Lahore. Pakistan bombarded Dwarka port in Saurashtra. With the attack on Chhamb repulsed and Indian successes across the Punjab border, the war was going in India's favour. The British press, which had till now kept quiet, turned haywire as soon as it learnt about Pakistan's reverses. 'India persists on the road to ruin' the *Manchester Guardian* wrote.[33] The *Times*, forgetting that it was Pakistan who had cast the first stone, accused India of having 'attacked Pakistan in an act of war'.[34] The Indian move was, none the less, a military manoeuvre to dilute the rigour of Pakistan's assault on Chhamb. Had India aggressive designs, the Indian army could easily have occupied Lahore. But it did not, because all India wanted, was to protect Indian territory, not to take any of Pakistan's. Sensible English journalists realised this, as for example Kingsley Martin who observed 'Her (India's) halting advance towards Lahore is intended to draw off Pakistan forces from Jammu; India has no desire for street fighting in Lahore'.[35]

The Chinese attitude was vehemently against India. She issued an ultimatum to India to 'immediately dismantle military installations on the Chinese side of Sikkim border or face serious consequences.' But Shastri was not the man to be

33 The *Manchester Guardian*, 7 September 1965.
34 The *Times*, 7 September 1965,
35 Kingsley Martin, Reflections on Kashmir, *New Statesman*, 17 September 1965.

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cowed down by threats, and he told parliament 'The might of China will not deter us from defending our territorial integrity.'

The war was exhausting both to India as well as to Pakistan. World powers urged the United Nations to intervene, and on 20 September a resolution of the Security Council, jointly sponsored by US and the Soviet, demanded a cease-fire effective from 2+30 hours on 22 September. India accepted, and so did Pakistan, though with reluctance. Thus the twenty-two day's war came to an end.

A more pointless war had never been fought. The warring nations gained nothing, and lost much in the shape of an injured economy. But the war was not without its significance. A resolute and more self-confident India emerged from it, and a subdued and chastened Pakistan. The conflict showed that more important than the weapons of were those who manned them. The dreaded US Pattons were a flop, and so many were wrecked that their graveyard was named Patton-nagar (the city of the Pattons). The Indian made Gnat, a small plane made at Banglore's HAL, outmatched the American Sabre jets. The myth that the mere acquisition of foreign made sophisticated weapons would enhance a country's military might, was exploded. Shastri, the small man, became the small great man of Indla. Those who had doubted his ability to handle the crisis of war, had now nothing but praise for him. Rarely has a man become so quickly a national hero.

The Soviet Premier, Alexie Kosygin now invited Lal Bahadur Shastri and Ayub Khan to Tashkent in order to negotiate a settlement between India and Pakistan. At one stage during the ensuing talks it appeared that the eternal deadlock in Kashmir would prevent an agreement. But Kosygin persisted in his efforts and at last it was agreed that all the armed personnel of the two countries would withdraw not later than 25 February 1966 to the positions they had prior to 5 August 1965. by the joint Tashkent declaration of 22 January 1966 both sides agreed 'to restore normal and peaceful relations between their countries and to promote understanding and friendly relations between their peoples.' They promised to end tension between India and Pakistan, continue diplomatic and friendly relations, discuss matters in dispute peacefully, repatriate

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prisoners of war, and create conditions which prevented the exodus of people.

The declaration coming from powers so hostile as India and Pakistan was doubtless a great achievement, and Kosygin's role in it was highly creditable. In India, however, the reaction to it was mixed. The main criticism against it was that it was a betrayal by the prime minister 'of the solemn assurances and undertakings given by the government to parliament and the people'.[36] But was it ? Before his departure for Tashkent, Shastri had made two promises. The first was that India's sovereignty, involved in the Kashmir issue, was not negotiable, and secondly the war as a method of settling disputes would be abandoned by both the nations. The Indian prime minister made no compromise on the Kashmir issue and the objective of peaceful negotiation was also achieved. By agreeing to the withdrawal of the Indian forces India had to give up strategic positions captured by them, viz. Tithwal and Kargil. An agreement, however, involves compromises by the two parties negotiating. One cannot get something for nothing. India had herself insisted on the restoration of the status quo as on 5 August 1965 as a precondition for the end of the conflict. So by agreeing to withdrawal from Tithwal and Kargil, Shastri was only sticking to commitments already made. Besides, India had consistently taken the stand that its aim was to preserve its own national integrity and not to grab any of Pakistan's territory. In fact it was Pakistan which was disappointed that its aggressive designs were foiled. Fatima Jinnah, declared 'what the blood of our brave soldiers achieved was thrown away at the conference table. The Tashkent Declaration betrays lack of sagacity, wisdom, foresight and vision.' Trashkent was Shastri's triumphal swangsong. After signing the declaration at 11 p.m., Nanda, India's home minister had complimented him on the phone. 'You have proved not only a war leader' he had said to him 'but a peace leaderas well.' Less then three hours after, the prime minister was dead. It was the kind of death the poet had in mind when he wrote :

36 Atal Behari Vajpayee leader of the Jana Sangh group in the Rajya Sabha.

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'So be my passing !
My task accomplished and the long day done,
My wages taken, and in my heart
Some late lark singing.
Let me be gathered to the quiet west
The sundown splendid and serene,
Death.'[37]

Unassuming, soft-spoken, sincere to the core and straightforward, Shastri was none the less firm and unyielding on what he believed to be right. Essentially a man of peace, he handled war as if he had been doing it all his life. One writer says 'Shastri was great but Nehru greater. In the case of Shastri circumstances made him a hero, while in the case of Nehru, he himself largely moulded circumstances. Had there been no war with Pakistan, what would have been the people's appraisal of Shastri ?'[38]

If there had been no war with Pakistan, Shastri would still have been great. Tashkent was only *one* of his achievements. It was due entirely to Shastri that an agreement was reached over the status of Indians in Ceylon. He did much to patch up disunity in the Congress party. He was a true democrat. As one of his biographers says 'The difference between Nehru and Shastri was that one shaped and led public opinion ; the other followed and reflected public opinion'.[39] Shastri's prime ministership lasted barely twenty months, Nehru's seventeen years. Had he lived longer 'say until 1972 when he would have been sixty-eight, the Congress split would almost certainly not have occurred, and it is possible that the course of Indian development and progress would have been different. Shastri's realism would have alerted him to the hiatus left Nehru ; and his pragmatic good sense would have tried to wean India away from built-in ideologies to down-to-earth, practicable plans and

37 William Earnest Henley (1849-1903) *Echoes*, XXXV *Margaritae Sororis*.
38 P. Tharyan, *India the Critical Decade After Nehru*, Sterling, 1974 p. 33.
39 D.R. Mankekar, *Lal Bahadur Shastri*, Publications Division, Govt. of India, 1973, 223-4.

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projects.'[40] Nehru's greatness does not detract from Shastri's. Both were great men in their own way. If one judges from achievements, what Shastri accomplished in his brief years of leadership was unbelievably remarkable. And when one adds to it his charming homely human qualities, Mankekar's words perhaps convey best one's feeling for India's small great man :

> 'Alas, we will never witness the Shastri manner in New Delhi, or anywhere else again. For after fashioning Shastri, Nature would appear to have broken the mould. There is none other like him,'[41]

Bangladesh

Trashkent proved to be an uneasy truce. Pakistan's foreign minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had been against the settlement, and his position was to make him popular later on. East and West Pakistan were separated not only by miles of Indian territory but also by differences in language, culture and ideologies. The two were not pulling on well together, more particularly after a dictatorship had been established under General Mohammed Ayub Khan. Religion was the only uniting factor between East and West Pakistan, but soon the West began to dominate over the Muslim Bengalis of the East, although numerically they were weaker. The Punjabis of West Pakistan, who were more prosperous than the Bengalis of the East manned most of the civil and military services and ran most of Pakistan's industries. Under Ayub Khan oppression increased, and reached such proportions that the Bengalis of East Pakistan began a separatist movement inspired by their leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, known popularly as Mujib. Mujib had founded the Awami League and had become its general secretary in 1953. On 12 February 1966 he adopted a six-

40 Frank Moraes, *Witness to an Era*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973, p. 249.

41 D.R. Mankekar, *Lal Bahadur Shastri*, Publications Division, Government of India, 1973, p. 225.

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point programme for a popular movement. The Awami Lea gue wanted a federation, with a parliament elected by adult suffrage, freedom for the federating states to levy taxes (out of which the centre would have a share), to manage all subjects other than defence and foreign affairs, to enter into trade agreements and utilise their own earned foreign exchange and to have their own militia and para military forces; and stoppage of the movement of capital from East to West Pakistan.

Ayub responded by having Mujib arrested for conspiracy and by stringent measures to suppress his movement. India's first secretary, whom he suspected without any proof of taking part in the conspiracy, was expelled from East Pakistan. Delhi retaliated by charging the Pakistani counsellor of espionage and asking him to leave. Relations between Pakistan and India had become strained once more. Meanwhile opposition to Ayub's dictatorial methods was growing in West Pakistan as well, where a People's Party sprang up under the leadership of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Ayub promptly got Bhutto arrested too and tried to stamp out the movement. This, however, was too much to take on, even for a strong-willed dictator. Ayub found the law and order machinery collapsing and chaos setting in. Exit was the only way out. So he resigned on 25 March 1969, making way for General Yahya Khan.

Yahya Khan declared martial law and was sworn in as president. He proceeded to restore law and order and that meant further repression. But Yahya Khan realised that doing that would make things worse. He decided to hand over his military government to civilian control and hold elections on the basis of universal male suffrage. The elections were held in December 1970. Mujib (who had been released) and his Awami League, captured almost all the seats in East Pakistan, while in the West, Bhutto and his People's Party were returned with a bare majority. Bhutto could have joined hands with Mujib to creat a stable constitutional government for Pakistan, but again regional affiliations triumphed over national ones, and he refused to co-operate. Yahya Khan was not at all happy with the election results. He thought after years of exile the Awami League would have been crippled for ever. The democratic experiment was just a gambit to retain both dictatorship and

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popularity. But it hadn't turned out that way. So taking advantage of Bhutto's stand, he began to give full rein to dictatorship. Mujib and the other Awami League leaders were again arrested. Early in March 1971 troops opened fire on demonstrators in East Pakistan. In a few months more than 200,000 Hindus and Muslims had been killed in the firings. Thousands were arrested and tortured. The Bengali intelligentsia were the worst sufferers and practically all of them were mown down by Pakistani soldiers. It was all hell let loose.

What might have remained a civil war between East and West Pakistan, became a war between India and Pakistan due to the frontier situation, and because Pakistan extended the fighting to Indian territory also. Pakistan atrocities in East Bengal led to a swarm of refugees trekking across the border. By August 1971 their number was 7,500,000. India could hardly refuse to assist these hungry, tortured and tired millions. But with her own population swelling and her economy in bad shape, it was a most vexing issue. The only way to stop the inflow of this human sea of misery was to ease the pressure on East Pakistan. Yahya Khan had no intention of doing this, and his resolve was strengthened by the impression being given to him by China and the US that they would help him. Meanwhile the liberation army, Mukti Bahini, which had been formed in East Pakistan was putting up a courageous resistance.

In West Pakistan Bhutto had been vilifying India. An Indian Airlines plane was hijacked to Pakistan from Kashmir. Pakistan welcomed the hijackers as heros and called them 'freedom fighters.' Bhutto praised them highly. Their deed, he said, showed that 'no power on earth can stifle Kashmir's struggle for freedom.' India's request for handing over the hijackers was rejected, and no compensation was paid. The Indian government banned overflights from West to East Pakistan. On December 2 1971 Pakistani plans bombed Agartala, the capital of Tripura, a small state near East Bengal. Next day the airports of several Indian towns—Srinagar, Pathankot, Amritsar, Faridkot, Agra, Jodhpur and Ambala—were bombed. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi told the nation 'Pakistan has launched a full-scale war against us.'

The third Indo-Pakistan war was more widespread than the second (of 1965), as both sectors were involved. In East

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Bengal the combined forces of the Mukti Bahini and the Indian army advanced rapidly and freed many areas. On the western front the army carried out an attack deep into Sindh and a number of Pakistan's towns were bombed. Finally Pakistani forces retreated to Dacca and were surrounded by the Indian army. Although China and US had been encouraging Pakistan and the Chinese were supplying her arms, no positive assistance came from any of them in Pakistan's hour of need. The US moved her Seventh Fleet to the Indian Ocean, but this did not dampen the spirit of the Indian fighting forces. The Soviet Union stood firmly by India, and this doubtless was responsible to a great extent in keeping US and China neutral.

Encircled by the Indian forces and the Mukti Bahini, Pakistan's army had no option but to surrender, or else as General Manekshaw announced, death awaited them. 'Once you surrender you shall be treated with dignity' he told them. On 16 December the Pakistani forces laid down their arms and the instrument of surrender was signed. On the same day India declared a unilateral cease-fire on the western front, and on 17 December Pakistan too declared a cease-fire.

India had already formally given diplomatic recognition to Bangladesh (as liberated East Pakistan was henceforth called) on 6 December, and as a consequence Pakistan had severed relations with India. Soon most countries gave their recognition to Bangladesh though Pakistan did so only three years later, in February 1974, and that too with reluctance.

With the ending of the war Yahya Khan had to step down, and he was succeeded by Bhutto. Pakistan had lost five thousand square miles of its territory after inflicting untold suffering on the people of Bangladesh. Mujib was released from prison and became Bangladesh's first prime minister. He started well, but he did not prove a good administrator, and soon had sycophants fluttering around him. He squandered money, and his regime became notorious for nepotism and corruption. The Rakhi Bahini, a personal armed force, afforded him protection and he gradually upset all those democratic traditions for which he had struggled and suffered. In December 1974 he proclaimed an emergency and suspended civil liberties. He had turned from a democratic leader into a dictator. What was more

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he incensed the national army of Bangladesh, which was already resentful of the Rakhi Bahini, by abruptly dismissing army officers without sufficient cause, and showing his mistrust of them by appointing his favoured civil administrators as army commandants. On 15 August 1975 some of the junior army officers staged a coup. There was a cruel bloodbath in which Mujib and his entire family and relations were ruthlessly shot dead, even the women—Mujib's wife and his two young daughters-in-law and also their youngest son who was only ten years old. Soon after (7 November 1975) there was yet another coup in which the senior military officers, under the guise of punishing the assassins, overthrew the civilian government, which in any case was so paralysed with awe that it had become ineffective. Ziaur Rahman became elected president in June 1978. He was assassinated in May 1981, and on 20 November Abdus Sattar became the eighth president. But his regime was cut short by yet another coup on 24 March 1982 in which power was seized by the chief of the Bangladesh army, General Hossain Mohammed Ershad.

Relations between India and Bangladesh remained cordial in the beginning, but gradually they suffered a decline. Following the assassination of President Ziaur Rahman in May 1981 the pro-Pakistani Islamic Al Badr and Al Shams group became more assertive. The pan-Islamic Gulf countries tried to fan up pro-Pakistani sentiments. Saudi Arabia began to use its vast resources to finance pro-Arab Islamic institutions in Bangladesh. Many persons in power in Bangladesh including Prime Minister Shah Azizur Rahman, were those who opposed Bangladesh's breakaway from Pakistan. There appeared to be a strong possibility that the ruling Bangladesh National Party (BNP) might go in for some kind of federation with Pakistan. Friction arose between India and Bangladesh over the New Moore Island and the Farakka issue.[42] Then there was the reluctance of India to import goods from Bangladesh and to provide credits to help its development plans. There were of course those who favoured friendship with India, particularly Awami League leader Asaduzzaman Khan, and Rashed Khan

42 A note on these disputes is given at the end of the chapter.

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Menon. In the Bangladesh presidential elections held in 1981 the acting president Justice Abdus Sattar scored an overwhelming victory. Bangladesh prime minister Shah Azizur Rahman said it was 'a victory for democracy', but the opposition Awami League candidate Dr Hussein and the party chairman Mrs Hasina Wazid called the election 'a fraud' and claimed that hoodlums and gangsters were let loose almost everywhere 'to terrorise voters, capture booths and launch armed assaults to fully rig the election and turn it into a total farce'.[43]

In March 1982 General Ershad, the commander in chief of the Bangladesh armed forces, in yet another coup, announced the take over the government by the military. Several dozen senior civil servants and police officers were sacked. Green booklets entitled *Islam the Complete Way of Life* were circulated, which significantly was a reprint of a speech made by the Saudi Arabian ambassador, in Dacca two years ago.

President Abdus Sattar has been ousted, General Ershad proclaimed, 'because of corruption in public life and the fight for power' by members of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party. The ruling party, he said 'had forgotten its duty towards the people and the country and its members were engaged in the struggle for power. This had endangered the security and the sovereignty of the country'.

It would be premature to say what the changeover would imply to Indo-Bangladesh relations. Abdus Sattar had been placating elements in his Bangladesh Nationalist Party that were unabashedly pro-Pakistan. Maybe General Ershad may prove better. Despite internal conditions being so bad in Bangladesh that the IMF stopped paying its loan instalments, it has been feverishly building up its armed strength in the west. Unless General Ershad tows a new line, the country which India assisted in its bid for liberation with the blood of her soldiers, and whose hungry people she fed and nourished by money she could ill-spare, might yet turn against her; proving religion to be a force stronger than regional affinities.

43 *The Pioneer* 17 November 1981.

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India's Subsequent Relations with Pakistan

The problems arising out of the war of 1971, viz. repatriation of prisoners of war, the future of non-Bengalis in Bangladesh, the trial of war criminals and recognition of the new State by Pakistan; remained unsolved for a long time. The toughest issue was recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan, and it was with great reluctance that Bhutto agreed to this three years after, on 21 February 1974. In April, the same year, an agreement was signed between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh by which Pakistan agreed to accommodate more Pakistani nationals from Bangladesh, and Bangladesh consented to drop the proposed trial of 195 Pakistani prisoners of war. Kashmir has always been the thorny issue between India and Pakistan. Pakistan, which can never reconcile herself to the fact that Kashmir is now part of India, keeps raising the issue again and again. Meanwhile Pakistan's stand in relation to India continues to be dubious. For example, Islamabad has been offering a 'no-war' pact to India but refuses to invite the India government for talks about it. The main reason for this is that General Zia-ul-Haq wishes to convince the US that Pakistan is a 'weak beleaguered and frontline state' so that he can obtain the F-16 jets and other military equipment. The US has largely been tilted in favour of Pakistan and President Reagan is keen to give her military aid on a large scale (about 3.2 billion dollars). What is more, the Reagan administration is agreeable to provide Pakistan with sophisticated F-16 fighter aircraft, although these are in short supply in US itself, for the US air force need another 1,000 of F-16's to make up its prescribed strength. The US's aim to thus arm Pakistan is ostensibly to counteract Russian occupation in Afghanistan. But there is nothing to prevent Pakistan's using the planes against India. As a counter-measure India is going in for the purchase of Mirage fighter planes from France and also manufacturing them indigenously with French assistance. At the same time Pakistan is trying to impress on the Soviet 'its desire for peace', and its 'fear of the Indian threat', both of which are purely chimerical. Experts seem to be of the view that 'the Pakistani double-think double-talk is really aimed at raising the force

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level of Pakistani military to equal that of India'.[44]

The matter regarding Pakistan's readmission to the Commonwealth (whose membership it had renounced) was not discussed at the Commonwealth conference held at Melbourne in October 1981. Mrs Gandhi had made her reservations on this point known to Pierre Trudeau the Canadian prime minister when she met him in August at Nairobi. The Australian prime minister, Malcolm Fraser, who came to Delhi was told that the Commonwealth could not afford to have a 'mercurial' member who could 'opt in and out at will.'[45] Thus India's subtle diplomacy successfully kept Pakistan out of the Commonwealth. Meanwhile Pakistan has constantly been offering India a 'no-war pact', while all the time arming herself to the teeth by foreign assistance. No wonder the offer is being taken with reserve by India, particularly as the ever-burning question of Kashmir is being unnecessarily tagged with it. India's external affairs minister said in the Lok Sabha that India's response to Pakistan's so-called 'no-war pact' offer would be positive only if it constituted the acceptance of a similar offer which India had made 31 years ago.[46] In an interview General Zia is reported to have told an Indian journalist : 'the Kashmir problem, in my opinion, is the Achilles's heel in the whole issue of Pakistan-India relations.....For 35 years Pakistan has got the Kashmir issue wrapped up in its internal politics. I can't unwrap it even if I had all the intentions. So somehow or the other with our normalisation of relations we have to take a look on the Kashmir issue also and see how best this problem can be resolved.'[47] This clearly shows that Kashmir is linked up in President Zia's mind with any future pact with India.

Pakistan remains as hostile to India as ever before—a hostility given an edge to by nations of the West, whose constant fear is a united Asia.

44 Prakash Chandra, *India & Pak, the Deadlock Continues*, *Northern India Patrika*, 26 September 1981.

45 UNI, 7 October 1981.

46 *The Pioneer*, 11 November 1981.

47 Ajit Bhattacharjea's interview with General Zia, *Sunday* 6, December 1981.

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India and Sri Lanka (Ceylon)

Ceylon has much in common with India historically. The Sinhalese constitute 70 per cent of Ceylon's population and their ancestor Prince Vijaya is believed to have come from Bengal in the sixth century B.C. Ashoka, the then Indian monarch sent his son, Mahendra, to spread Buddhism in Ceylon in the third century B.C., and it became the dominant religion there. Soon after the Tamil King, Elare, invaded Ceylon and ruled it for some time. He was killed by Duttugemunu, a Sinhalese warrior, in 161 B.C. Hindu influence origating from the south of India became dominant from the eleventh to the fifteenth century, and in the thirteenth a Tamil kingdom was established in the Jaffna peninsula. Thus a mixed society emerged in Ceylon. Of this some were Ceylon Tamils. There were also many persons of Indian origin who had migrated to Ceylon to work on the plantations in the island's interior. These persons became known as 'Indian Tamils.' There were about a million Indian Tamils among the total six million people in Ceylon. That meant one-sixth of the population. The Sinhalese began to feel that they were being swamped out in their country, particularly because the five million Ceylonese were split up into a number of minorities.

The problem of Indians in Ceylon was one of the legacies of British rule. Under the citizenship laws enacted by Ceylon, Indians were not given Ceylon nationality, and since most of them did not apply for Indian nationality, they found themselves in the peculiar position of belonging to no country. One way out was to absorb some of these persons in the country of their origin, i.e. India. But for a long time there was difference in views about the number of persons who could be thus absorbed. Nehru considered that the suggested number of 250,000 was far more than what India could take. On 30 October 1964 a pact was signed between Shastri, the Indian prime minister and Mrs Srimavo Bandarnaika prime minister of Ceylon. It was agreed that Ceylon would confer citizenship on 825,000 out of the total number of 975,000 stateless persons. 525,000 together with their natural increase would be repatriated to India, and 300,000 along with their natural

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increase would be absorbed by Ceylon. The repatriation to India and the grant of citizenship of Ceylon were to 'keep pace with each other in proportion to the relative numbers, in the ratio 7:14.' The Ceylonese government agreed that persons who were gainfully employed on the date of their repatriation would continue to remain employed in accordance with a phased programme or till they were 55 years old.

The implementation of the agreement, however, was extremely slow, particularly up to 1970. In April 1973 it was agreed by the prime ministers of the two countries that 'statelessness' in Sri Lanka would come to an end by 1982. But the rate of repatriation was so slow thereafter that it would take nearly 38 years. Even if it was speeded, the process could not possibly be completed before 1989. Another difficulty was about Indians not covered by the employment pact. They faced great miseries, particularly in the context of increasing unemployment on the estates. A large number of people were uncertain of their position because their applications for Sri Lanka citizenship were not being speedily disposed of, and till that was done they could not, if they felt necessary, apply for Indian citizenship. Some co-ordination was called for in this repect. The pact of 1964 was drawn up on the population then existing, while it did not account for the natural increase in the number of Indian Tamils, or of illicit immigration. These factors upset calculations. In India, too, the repatriates, who were mostly settled on tea, coffee and rubber plantations in the southern states, were not getting enough incentive to be able to restart a new life. The acute foreign exchange crisis in Sri Lanka also dampened the pace of repatriation.

The two agreements signed between India and Ceylon—one by Shastri and the other between Mrs Gandhi and Mrs Bandarnaika—allowing for the repatriation of 600,000 Tamils to India, have been failures. So far 273,000 people have been repatriated, another 83,000 are awaiting repatriation, while Sri Lanka granted citizenship to 156,000. The fate of nearly 600,000 remains uncertain. The Srimavo-Indira pact expired in October 1981, and Indian Tamils of Sri Lanka do not seem to favour another agreement for their repatriation. They

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believe they should rather join hands with Ceylon Tamils to fight for their rights.

Meanwhile in Sri Lanka tension is building between Sinhalese and Tamils, which drives Indian Tamils and Ceylon Tamils together. In 1972 several Tamil political parties combined to form the TULF (Tamil United Liberation Front) which was dedicated to fight for Tamil rights and political independence. An offshoot of this was the militant Ealam Tigers who adopted terrorist methods. The government of Sri Lanka proscribed the movement in 1978. The TULF had been reluctant to adopt Ealam methods, but when in 1974 the police violently disrupted the World Tamil Research Conference in Jaffna killing 9 people, it changed its mind.

The animosity between the Sinhalese and Tamils has erupted into violence riots and killings ever since a ruling party candidate for Jaffna district development council was shot dead allegedly by the Ealam Tigers in May 1981[48]. A week later four policemen were killed, and in retaliation the police burnt the famous Jaffna Public Library, the offices of *Ealanadu* (a Tamil daily), the headquarters of TULF and the house of a TULF member of parliament. Only a couple of months later in August 1981 a well planned week long savage orgy of violence, 'the worst in recent Sri Lanka history' broke out in nearly 30 towns and villages in five provinces. Hundreds of houses owned by Tamilians were gutted and systematically looted by Sinhalese thugs who also killed 17 Tamils and gang-raped four young Tamil women. After four days of violence emergency was clamped by Sri Lanka's president, Junius R.Jayawardene.[49] The Tamil Nadu chief minister flew to Delhi to champion the Tamils's cause, but India took it as 'a purely internal affair.'

The vote of Indian Tamils contributed largely to the UNP's success in 1977, but now Tamils may not be keen to give support. Meanwhile tension between Sinhalese and Tamils continues, and a violent confrontation is the inevitable outcome, unless a third party mediates. This party can well be India,

48 The ruling party is the United National Party (UNP).
49 *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, September 1-15, 1981, p. 16.

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for both the Sinhalese and the Tamils might agree to such mediation. But India is too preoccupied with China and Pakistan and her own internal problems, to show any such inclination yet.

India and Nepal

The British policy towards Nepal after the establishment of the Rana regime was based on giving it support in order to make it stable and keep it within the British sphere of influence. Thus the British were able to maintain Nepal as a strong buffer state and desisted from interference in its internal government. After India achieved independence there was a shift in its policy towards Nepal, inasmuch as it began to favour democratic forces there. The Rana rule had become an anachronism and India thought that unless she backed the democratic element in Nepal they might fall prey to Chinese communism. Nehru informed the Indian parliament on 17 March 1950 that the government of Nepal had been advised 'to bring themselves into line with democratic forces that are stirring the world today.'

Due to India's intervention, the democratic element represented by the Nepal Congress became predominant in 1951, and the Rana wing was completely eliminated. A general election was held in 1959 as a result of which an elected popular government was formed by the Nepali Congress headed by B.P. Koirala its leader. But a number of other parties which sprang up were anti-Indian in their attitude, as the Nepali Communist party, the Praja Parishad, the Nepali Rashtriya Congress and the Gurkha Parished. They looked with suspicion on India, When the Kosi River project was planned, in which a dam was to be constructed in Nepal territory with Indian finances and knowhow and which would provide electricity and irrigation to both Nepal and India, a large section of the Nepalese viewed this as a step towards Indian domination.

India's attitude was that while she respected Nepal's independence she was not averse to Nepal entering into alliances with other countries. Nehru declared that he welcomed such

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alliances because India wished to 'see Nepal develop into a strong and progressive country'.[50] But he did not favour any foreign interference in Nepal or any invasion of its integrity. With the Chinese overrunning Tibet, this became all the more vital to India. But China started wooing Nepal by exchange of cultural delegations, personal visits by the Chinese premier Chou En-lai, and more positively by a massive economic aid without any strings. China made a free grant to Nepal of sixty million Indian rupees. King Mahendra of Nepal welcomed the aid, though the Nepalese feelings towards China were a mixture of cordiality and suspicion. The possibility that China might make claims on Nepal could not be ruled out. In a private conversation Tanka Prasad, a Nepalese statesman, expressed concern about being 'squeezed to death by two giants.' In his visit to Nepal in 1960 Kingsley Martin found that thoughtful people in Kathmandu were afraid of China. The orthodox frontier people of Nepal, who were worshippers of Dalai Lama, were also resentful of the Chinese. Nepal was for a neutral policy. Being a small country it believed it should maintain the goodwill of more powerful nations near and far. King Mahendra said 'we are not in favour of forming even a neutral bloc', and during his visit to India in 1962 he observed 'The kingdom of Nepal is always committed to following the policy of peace and friendship towards all friendly countries including India.' In fact in this China was only duplicating India's own policy of non-alignment.

Soon however India and Nepal began to drift apart. The main reason for this was the sudden coup of King Mahendra who, on 15 December 1960, invoking the emergency provisions of the Nepalese constitution, dissolved the cabinet and the elected parliament, and ordered the arrest of B.P. Koirala and many of the ministers and national leaders. Although the king brought specific charges against the ministry, the main reason for the coup was the remarkable success of the Nepali Congress in the 1959 election and the rise of real democracy in Nepal. The Indian prime minister reacted strongly, saying 'This is a complete reversal of democracy and the democratic

50 address to parliament, 6 December 1950.

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process....one views such a development with considerable regret.' The statement and the observations of many of the Indian papers retarded Indian-Nepalese relations. Moreover Indian leaders began to take active interest in a movement against the royal regime. King Mahendra's attitude remained reasonable. He wished to have cordial relations with India, but at the same time he did not want to estrange other powers. In a declaration of Nepal's foreign ploicy he said 'for a small country like Nepal sandwiched between two giants the best way open to it is to limit itself as far as possible to it own interests.'[51] So King Mahendra set about negotiating with India, and at the same time accepting the friendly offers of Pakistan and China. Auyb Khan was keen for Nepal's friendship because he wished to lessen India's influence in the Himalayan region. Like the Nepalese king he too was opposed to parliamentary democracy. In the years 1962-3 Nepal and Pakistan signed three trade agreements in which Nepal got the facility of transit of her goods through Chittagong and other Pakistan territory, free of customs or transit duties. This dispensed with Nepal's dependence of India in such matters. Negotiations with India were less successful because of the Nepali Congress campaign against the king. An attempt was made on the king's life at Janakpur and Dr Tulsi Giri, Nepal's foreign minister, accused India directly for it. He also criticised the Indian policy of inaction in checking ra ds to Nepal from Indian territory. King Mahendra too felt the same way and warned that 'these anti-national elements might jeopardize traditional relations with India.'[52] India disowned responsibility for the flow of arms across the border. 'I cannot guarantee against some odd things going across', Nehru said. 'It is a long border. There is free transit.' With all this, relations worsened. King Mahendra said 'friendship is not a one-sided affair' and expressed regret at the unfriendly

51 G.P. Bhattacharjee, *India and Politics of Modern Nepal*, The Minerva Associates, 1970, p. 133, *op. cit.* (Statement of Principles : Major Foreign Policy Speeches by His Majesty King Mahendra)

52 To the Nepal Sambad Samiti and Sagarmatha Sambad Samiti, February 1962.

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comments of India on Nepal's internal political developments. But the comments continued. On 29 September 1962 three Nepalese policemen entered Raxaul an Indian border town and wounded four Indian constables. This caused panic among Indian traders which Nepal categorized as a trade embargo. On 4 October at Birganj, Nehru's effigy was burnt in full view of the people of Raxaul. Chinese foreign miniser, Marshal Ch'en Yi said 'should any foreign power attack Nepal, the Chinese government and people will stand by it'[53] This paved the way for closer ties between China and Nepal.

Nepal remained neutral in the Sino-Indian conflict, and took it as a border dispute. After the Chinese invasion of India, relations between India and Nepal improved largely due to the suspension of the Nepali Congress movement. The visit of India's prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri to Nepal in March 1963 further created goodwill. Panchayat democracy, as introduced by King Mahendra, was now fully supported by India. On 15 May 1968 Subarna Shumsher, acting president of the Nepali Congress offered 'fullest and most loyal co-operation' to the king. Swaran Singh, India's external affairs minister, had also assured the government of Nepal that the Indian government had no support for any anti-national activity by Nepalese citizens in India, and if any such activity was found it would be put a stop to. Meanwhile China was also extending her influence by building the Kathmandu-Kodari Road, and Pakistan by giving trade concessions.

Several problems were to be settled between Nepal and India. One was the boundary dispute in the Susta area, which arose due to a change in the course of the Gandak river. Nepal's foreign minister, G.B. Rajbandhari paid a visit to New Delhi on 1 May 1969, to discuss the issue. It was decided to demarcate the boundary by pillars. Further headway was made when Dinesh Singh the Indian foreign minister visited Kathmandu in June 1969, and both sides decided to constitute survey teams. In Nepal a feeling grew up that the dispute was not confined to the Susta area. The Nepalese journalist, Tanka Prasad

53 Keesing's Contemporary Archives 1963. Quoted in G.P. Bhattacharjee, *India and Politics of Modern Nepal*, Minerva Associates, 1970, p. 151.

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Acharya, said that boundary marks 'had been tampered with at many places along the entire border from the Mechi to the Mahakali zone.' He suggested that the entire boundary should be redelineated by a Boundary Commission within a fixed time-limit on the basis of the 1817 map. Nepal also insisted for the withdrawal of Indian personnel from her northern border and of the Indian military liason group from Kathmandu. These were initially stationed in Nepal on their own request, but were needful also for India's defence system against China, in view of the long open Indo-Nepal border. On the other hand the Chinese started consolidating their position in Nepal without any objection by the Nepal government. While Nepal wished to be friendly both with India as well as with China , she felt that India was not strong enough to help her in case of a Chinese attack. The Chinese invasion of India of 1962 had doubtless a significant part in creating this fear. Certain indiscreet utterances of Indian leaders also antagonised Nepal. For example India's foreign minister, Dinesh Singh, frequently stressed the 'special relationship', between India and Nepal. The Nepalese considered this a high-browed attitude, and it evoked an outburst against India by Nepal's prime minister Kirtinidhi Bista.

Nevertheless India and Nepal continued to co-operate in many schemes and projects of mutual benefit. For example there were the Trisuli and Pokhara hydel projects, and those of Kosi and Gandak. Many schemes for drinking water in Nepal were taken up with Indian assistance. India assisted Nepal in education schemes, village and cottage industries, transport and communications, public health, community development, horticulture, animal husbandry, agriculture, irrigation, and in the construction of railways and airports. Problems also arose; the greatest being smuggling of Chinese and foreign goods from Nepal and of food grains from India. These entailed strict border checking. In 1966 when India levied an additional tariff on imported manufactures in 1966 this created panic in Nepal, especially in its jute industry. In 1968 when Nepal banned the sale of cigarettes imported from India, it caused a flutter on the Indian side.

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Meanwhile King Birendra keeps alive the panchayat system. Nepal's first general election after a lapse of 21 years was held in May 1981. The verdict was indecisive. Although the panchayat party won by a narrow margin, 45 per cent voted in favour of a multi-party system. The victory of the panchayat party indeed was possible only because the voters considered it to be supported by the king. King Birendra still remains the main figure in Nepal's system of government. India and Nepal are bound both geographically and by common traditions Both are for non-alignment and peaceful co-existence. And Nepal is of particular significance for India in being the only Hindu state in the world. India needs to give much more goodwill and support to her than she has been giving in the past years. The age worn slogan of 'Hindi-Chini *bhai bhai*' could well be replaced by 'Hindi-Nepali *bhai bhai*.'

India and the Soviet Union

The almost impenetrable mountain ranges of Central Asia form a distinct barrier between Russia and India. Although isolated travellers and traders traversed this unknown region as early as the twelfth century, contacts were rare. In 1675 Czar Alexis tried to make a contact with the Mughal empire, but Aurangzeb was suspicious and refused to entertain the Russian delegation. With the coming of the British rule, rivalry grew between Russia and British India. The British feared that Russia had designs on India, and to deal with the threat they adopted a forward policy in Afghanistan. From 1880 to 1884 Russia extended its control as far as Merv, an oasis on the northern frontier of Afghanistan. In 1895 the Durand Line was conceived to demarcate the Indo-Afghan border, and a strip of land ceded to Afghanistan in the Pamir mountains to keep the British and Russian areas of influence separate. Thus independent India and Russia did not have a common frontier.

Relations between Russia and India after independence were cordial. One link was communism, for there was a strong communist party in India (CPI). But when Nehru sought American friendship after becoming prime minister, Moscow's attitude turned indifferent. In his last year, however, Stalin

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realised that India wanted a non-aligned policy, and Nehru was not with the western powers on the cold war issues in Asia. The Soviet Union therefore offered to augment Indo-Russian trade and in 1952 a Russian trade union sent India a shipment of wheat, rice, condensed milk and 25,000 rupees to help tide over a famine. Indian diplomats, notably Radhakrishnan and K.P.S. Menon, were among the few foreigners privileged to hold talks with the Russian government. Nehru, who visited Moscow, was impressed by Russia's socialistic society, her penal system, and the treatment of her internal minority and language problems, though he admitted there was 'much he did not understand and much he did not like.' He also appreciated that the only European nation which called for an end to British colonial rule in India was the USSR.

With the years Indo-Soviet relations further improved; signs of which were Russia's support for India on the Kashmir stand, strong Soviet backing for India's role in world affairs, and assistance in her economic and technological programmes. In 1953 Premier Malenkov praised India's efforts to end the Korean war and expressed the hope that in future, 'relations between India and the USSR will grow stronger and develop in a spirit of friendly co-operation.' The Soviet supported India's five points for peaceful coexistence, and in 1955 signed an agreement to build a steel plant at Bhilai. The Soviet support was welcomed, all the more so as at this time Pakistan began to get military aid from the US and joined the SEATO (South- East Asia Treaty Organisation) which was aimed against communist expansion in Asia. The Soviet's acceptance of the compromise settlement on Indo-China at the Geneva Conference of mid-1954 was also hailed by Nehru. Throughout 1955 there was exchange of delegations beween India and Russia. Nehru was the first non-Communist leader permitted to speak directly to Russian audiences.[54] Krushchev, Bulganin and other prominent Soviet leaders visited India. Soviet support to India on Kashmir and Goa brought the two nations closer than ever. But it was a disappointment that the USSR made no effort to assist India when the

54 Arther Stein, *India and the Soviet Union*, University of Chicago, 1969, p. 244.

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Chinese invaded India's northern frontier region, while US and Britain gave her substantial military aid. Nevertheless the USSR continued to give economic assistance. It had already given $ 500 for the third five-year plan, and promised to give another $ 500 for the fourth. In May 1964 the Soviet agreed to undertake the construction of a public-sector steel plant at Bokaro. In the same year India purchased MI 4 helicopters, transport planes and other military equipment from Russia. Russia also agreed to build three factories in India for manufacturing MIG airframes, engines, electronic equipment and missiles.

Russia supported India in UN, and twice used her veto in the Security Council in her favour on the vi al issues of Goa and Kashmir. The draft resolution condemning India's military take over of Goa was vetoed by the USSR, and Leonard Brezhnev while on a state visit, said, 'the Soviet people regard with full understanding and sympathy the desire of the Indian people to liberate Goa.' Similarly Russia vetoed a western sponsored resolution to hold plebiscite in Kashmir. At the same time Russia tried to improve her relations with Pakistan too. India and the Soviet joined in the UN for China's admission. When war broke out in Korea, both strove for peace. Both of them supported the Arab cause and insisted on Israel to give up aggression. They demanded withdrawal of foreign troops from Indo-China, and sympathised with the struggle of the people of South Vietnam. When Mrs Gandhi visited the USSR in July 1966 she too called for a cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam. India's appeal to reconvene the Geneva conference, however, met with no response from the Soviet. According to an agreement signed in December 1966 Russian assistance was promised for about 50 projects. These included an aluminium smelting plant in K rba (Madhya Pradesh). Technical schools were set up for training technicians. The USSR sent 200,000 tons of wheat in 1967 to tide the foodgrains shortage and provided a two million dollar aid to set up five state seed growing farms. Trade goes on briskly between the two countries. India imports machinery and spare parts and petroleum products, and exports spices, tea, wool, skins, and also steel and railway cars. To Shastri's call for a nuclear guarantee however, the USSR

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indicated that 'it was not interested in providing a protective umbrella for the nuclear have-nots '[55]

There has been an increase in the number of visiting Indian and Soviet scientists. India received metrical data from Soviet sputniks. Soviet scholars have shown interest in Indian cultural and literary works, and have translated many of them into Russian, while the USSR has printed a number of texts on scientific and technological subjects for Indian students. Many cheap periodicals have been circulated by Russia for Indian consumption.

Russia has, however, been critical of India for its slowness in implementing programmes of land reforms, its failure to bring down economic disparities, and to nationalise industries. It has not favoured the interference of western nations, particularly the US, in Indian domestic affairs, and because of this India had to shelve the American proposals of providing a high-powered transmitter on condition that she could use it for three hours daily and of providing small transmitters for relaying information. The USSR also criticised India for depending too much on American aid in building fertilizer plants. She also resents India giving any encouragement to Soviet defectors and, under pressure from the USSR, the Indian government prohibited in January 1968 foreign embassies in India from granting political asylum to defectors from another nation.

Russia's latest move in Afghanistan has caused a flutter among nations interested in the stability of central Asia. In 1979 a series of changes took place there. With the resignation of Tarakki, Hafizulla Amin became Afghanistan's prime minister on 16 September. But he was killed in a coup only three months later on 27 December. At the same time Soviet troops crossed the border to help the Afghan government to crush the insurgents. As a reaction the US surreptitiously supplied them arms and other assistance, and took measures to strengthen Pakistan. Ostensibly the US is supplying fighter planes and other equipment to counter the Afghan menace, but there is nothing to prevent Pakistan using these against India in case of renewed hostilities between the

55 Arthur Stein, *India and the Soviet Union*, Chicago, 1969, 272.

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two nations. The Afghan insurgents fall into three major groups, viz. the extreme right-wing one operating from within Pakistan, armed with US weapons; the nationalists who operate by themselves; and the leftist group consisting of sections like the SAMA, Shola-e-Javed and the Sitam-e-Millie.[56] The task of the Soviet forces is not so easy as the USSR thought it to be, for insurgents are difficult to spot and often they are mixed up with the civilian population. Besides, they have become a formidable force, strengthened by outside assistance. Afghanistan is also throwing feelers to India for help, and her foreign minister Shah Mohammed Dost came to New Delhi in September 1981 to hold talks about a political solution of the Afghan problem. Afghanistan has conveyed to India that it would 'welcome any gesture howsoever small, that denotes restraint and contributes towards creating a favourable atmosphere in the region.'[57] The Afghan prime minister, Sultan Ali Kishtmand and President Babrak Karmal also tried without success to interest the United Nations Secretary-General, Kurt Waldheim, in the problem. Afghan leaders fear that General Zia of Pakistan might block the way for holding talks on the issue.

Indian-Russian relations from the time India became independent, have almost always been happy. At a civic reception at Red Fort New Delhi, Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CPSU and Member Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, said in 1973:

'Friendship and co-operation with India is part and parcel of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. We were with you when India was under the yoke of colonisation. We were with you when India's new statehood was emerging. We were with you in the difficult and trying periods for India. We were with you when various external forces were trying to bring pressure on your country when it was upholding its vital interests.

56 The SAMA stands for Saazbanan-e-Azadi Bakshe Millie Afghanistan Group.

57 UNI, 6 September 1981

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'We shall be with you in the days of joy and in the days of trial.'[58]

That is a fair summary of Indo-Russian relations, except for the Chinese invasion. And that has been offset by the generous aid in the third Indo-Pakistan war when India found herself isolated. The new troposcatter communication link between India and Russia is another step to co-operation between the two countries. Inaugurating the link which opens up a new line of direct communication Mrs Indira Gandhi spoke to M. Brezhnev at Moscow. 'I am sure' she said 'this link will help in further strengthening Indo-Soviet co-operation.' Reciprocating, M. Brezhnev said 'I am confident that the relations between the Soviet Union and India, cemented by the treaty of peace, friendship and co-operation will also successfully develop in future.'[59] Russian friendship is all the more vital at this moment when the US under the presidentship of Ronald Reagan seems to be bent upon making Pakistan a strong fighting power with a big US military aid. It is only Russia which can hold the vital balance needed to prevent a future destructive Indo-Pakistan war.

India and the USA

Relations between India and US have shown surprising variations. The start was good and so was it in between, but from the Indo-Pak war of 1971 they showed a steady decline. Ever after Columbus started seeking a new Indian sea route, American ships tried to make for the Indian peninsula, and in 1784 the *Philadelphia* reached Pondicherry. The following year the *Hydra* and the *Grand Turk* followed. In 1792 Benjamin Joy of Boston was made American consul at Calcutta to watch trade interests. Early in the nineteenth century American missionaries started coming to India. Their object primarily was to confer the benefits of Christianity on the heathens to 'save their souls'. Since they wanted Americans to give more and

58 *India and the Soviet Union : Cooperation and Development*, Rasheeduddin Khan and others, Allied, 1975, p. xxxii.

59 *The Pioneer* 3 November 1981 (UNI news).

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more money for their endeavours they painted a dismal picture of Indians. Some of them, however, did a great deal to help famine stricken people in 1897 and 1899.

Intellectuals were able to see Indian culture in a better light. Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Hopkins, Lanman and Whitney on the American side; and P.C. Mazumdar (the Brahmo Samaj leader), Swami Vivekananda of the Parliament of Religions's fame and Swami Ram Tirtha on the Indian; brought the culture of the two countries closer together. Political leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai visited America and wrote about life there. Lajpat Rai, however, was also critical of the Americans, and his book *Unhappy India* provoked Katherine Mayo's *Mother India* which gave a highly distored picture of Indian living and, due to wide publicity in the USA, did great harm to Indo-American relations. Tagore's visit to America in 1930 was, however, received with acclaim.

Americans were very sympathetic to Indians in their struggle against colonial rule, and a number of societies were established in the USA for assisting them. A Christmas message from America in 1921 said 'We send our sympathy to the people of India, and our assurance that we will do all we may to promote the success of their struggle.'[60] Mahatma Gandhi and his technique of non-violence and non cooperation evoked particular interest in America. In 1941 the first US Commissioner, Thomas H. Wilson was appointed in new Delhi and Sir Girja Shanker Bajpai took over as India's Agent General in Washington. Roosevelt tried to bring about a settlement through his agent, Colonel Louis Johnson, when the Cripps mission was sent to India, though this was only due to the fact that he didn't want a hostile India to add to the troubles of the world war. The US was instrumental in securing release of many Indian leaders before the Simla talks of 1945. In 1946, when India was faced with an acute food shortage US sent many food shipments to India. The same year a direct air link was established between India and America.

After independence Indian relations with the US continued

60 *New York Times*, 26 December 1921, quoted in S.C. Tewari, *Indo-US Relations 1947-1976*, Radiant Publishers, 1977, p. 9.

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to be cordial. Addressing an American audience, Nehru said 'all of us in India know very well.... what great interest President Roosevelt had in our country's freedom and how he exercised his great influence to that end.' But Nehru's non-aligned policy did not find favour with American leaders who preferred alliances for the purpose of containing communism. The US, for example, formed the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) in 1949, the SEATO in 1954, and joined the CENTO (Central Treaty Organisation). The US policy of forming power blocs, from most of which India kept away, and in quite a number of which Pakistan was a member, kept India and America apart. Leading Americans were appreciative of the democratic experiment in the Indian sub-continent. But Indian thinking had a strong socialistic trait, even though it never really materialised in practice. The communist element was also strong in it. So when China went red, the US were not able to pursuade India join an anti-communist crusade. The fear that all of Asia might become communist always haunted the Americans despite the fact that it was almost as baseless as Britain's Russophobia. It was this, more than any real sympathy for India, which led the US, in departure to its normal policy, to actively assist her during the Chinese invasion. India's neutrality, while being generally helpful to her, gave Pakistan an edge over her in so far as relations with the US were concerned. When America wanted to establish military bases near the frontiers of China and Russia, India was reluctant, but Pakistan readily agreed. Pakistan's attitude towards the Korean war contrasted favourably with that of India, so far as the US was concerned. When the Security Council requested the US to nominate a commander for the UN forces in Korea, India kept away and apart from an ambulance unit, contributed nothing to the force. India wanted the Korean war to remain localised and resented the UN forces crossing the 38th parallel into Northern Korea. India further annoyed the US by canvassing for Communist China's entry in the Security Council. Pakistan, on the contrary, supported the US on her stand in the Korean conflict. India refused to participate in the San Francisco Conference of 1951 called for signing the

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Japanese Peace Treaty. She did not favour any agreement without Chinese participation, and thought the terms were unfair because there was no provision for the return of Formosa to China. What was more she vociferously condemned the treaty when she could have discreetly remained quiet about it. Ironically enough India's wooing of the Chinese had a most unexpected result when China turned against her. And such was the intricate web of international politics that it was US, whom India had spurned, who came to her aid. America could hardly afford China to create a communist block in Asia.

Indo-US relations, none the less, went on steadily deteriorating. America's pro-Pakistani attitude on the Kashmir issue was one irritant. Another was India's liberation of Goa, Daman and Diu. Russia had liberally supported the Indian action. Not so the US. Adlai E Stevenson, permanent representative of the United States to the UN Security Council said:

'The Indian tradition of non-violence has inspired the whole world, but this act of force with which we are confronted today mocks the faith of India's frequent declarations of exalted principle. It is a lamentable departure not only from the Charter but from India's own professions of faith.'[61]

It was not really the imperialist interest which guided India in using force on the Goa issue. She was on the contrary combating colonialism, as indeed Russia rightly observed. The action in Goa was prompted in the same spirit as that in Bangladesh. The motive was not oppression. It was the removal of oppression.

Differences on issues such as Indo-China, Hungary and Vietnam continued to keep India and the US apart[62] India

61 *Documents on American Foreign Relations 1961*, Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 1964, pp. 292-3.

62 The US forces came to the help of South Vietnam to crush communist insurgents who were getting aid from North Vietnam When North Vietnam attacked the US Navy in the Gulf of Tonkin, the US bombed North Vietnamese bases. The war ended only in April 1975 when North Vietnamese communist forces overthrew the South Vietnam government.

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objected to US setting up a military base at Diego Gracia in the Indian Ocean and to her supplying sophisticated arms to Pakistan. India exploded a nuclear device at Pokharan in Rajasthan on 18 May 1974 and though she did it only for peaceful purposes (a claim borne out by future advance in the nuclear field), the US Junior Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs said that it had 'aroused old suspicions and had an unsettling effect on political relations.'[63] On 24 February 1975 the US announced the lifting of the ten year old embargo on the supply of the arms to Pakistan despite the fact that there was no threat to Pakistan's internal security. The excuse given was that India had exploded a nuclear device. India had already made it clear that she was exploiting nuclear energy only for peaceful purposes. Even supposing the US thought this to be a step towards making the atom bomb, one wonders how America's adding to Pakistan's armoury would counter it ? The truth seems to be that America was growing increasingly pro-Pakistan with the object of making it an American centre to combat communism. Pakistan was readily willing to lend her country for such a base, India was not. US animosity towards India went so far that it withheld or delayed essential food supplies when there was an acute food shortage.

US-Indian relations do not seem to be improving. In fact in the Reagan regime they appear to be worse than ever. The US drift towards Pakistan is getting more and more marked. There is news that a massive American military aid of $ 2 billion (Rs 16,000 crore) is being provided to Pakistan over the next five years. The Indian prime minister's reaction to this is that 'India was not happy about escalation of the arms race in its region.' 'We feel' Mrs Gandhi said 'such induction of arms is perhaps dangerous to Pakistan itself. It draws it much closer into the network of confrontation.'[64] At the Cancun summit in October 1981, which was attended besides US, by leaders from 22 developed and developing countries, Reagan formulated stiff terms for any global negotiations. The American

63 *India Quarterly*, Jan-Mar 1974, p. 5.
64 *The Pioneer*, 10 October 1981.

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bid to strengthen Pakistan militarily, and the apathy towards India will more likely than not, drive India towards the USSR which has more consistently been supporting India than any other big power. Although Mrs Gandhi said that 'propaganda about India being pro-Soviet was deliberate',[65] she also explained how India had been drawn to the Soviet : 'When India had approached the United States for help in setting up steel plants in the public sector, it had declined. The Soviet Union had then helped. Similarly, in the field of oil exploraiton India had approached western countries, who said that there was no oil. India then approached Rumania which did the job with Soviet help.'[66] India is apparently clinging fast to the raft of non-alignment so that she can board any ship. But US policy in Asia might force her off the raft.

Indian Foreign Policy Generally

India has always been an apostle of non-alignment ever since Nehru. Explaining India's stand Mrs Gandhi said in October 1981 :

'India has never been pro-Soviet or anti-US or pro-US or anti-Soviet. India is pro-India. We were, we are, and we will remain non-aligned.'[67]

Alignment, in fact, has really no meaning for a developing nation, which has necessarily to depend on others for many things. India particularly, has to rely on foreign aid even for food. The foreign aid from the beginning of the first five-year plan upto 31 March 1965 was Rs. 5,258.9 crore out of which more than half (Rs 2, 719.3 crore) was from the United States alone.[68] Since then the aids have been mounting steeply. Obviously India has to rely on many nations for monetary assistance, and it cannot afford to be particularly attached to any one. Because of her not joining any particular block, India has stood to gain.

65 *The Pioneer*, 10 October 1981.
66 *Ibid.*
67 *Ibid.*
68 P.L. Eldridge, *The Politics of Foreign Aid in India*, Vikas, 1964, p. 188.

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Recently the US was vehemently against the International Monetary Fund (IMF) giving the biggest ever loan of 5.6 billon dollars to India. The American *Wall Street Journal* said that the Indian prime minister takes apparent pleasure in 'thumbing her nose at the US.'[69] When the IMF later sanctioned the loan in November 1981, the US abstained from voting for it, but all the other nations including Britain, France, West Germany, Saudi Arabia and other oil-exporting countries backed the sanction. The US statement said : 'We are not convinced that India's balance of payments problem requires drawing on IMF resources to the extent envisaged'. In addition the US questioned some aspects of the programme, 'which do not seem to provide sufficient clarity as to permit us adequately to judge performance.'[70] The huge loan, computed between 5.6 billion and 5.7 billion dollars at current SDR value which enabled India to meet its current balance of payment problems created by higher import costs of oil and other items, was a triumph for India's non-aligned foreign policy. Even from the military point of view non-alignment has paid off. In the Chinese invasion the US came to India's help; in the war with Pakistan about Bangladesh, the Soviet. That two such diametrically opposed powers should have come to India's assistance is a tribute to non-alignment. How long can India remain non-aligned, it is difficult to say. But it seems that till she does not emerge from a developing country to a developed one, that is the only alternative. There are numerous factors which impede India's progress, as for example the steep rise in population, inflation, price-rise, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, lack of exploitation of internal resources, top heavy and unproductive expenditure, and above all poor performance. None of these ills shows any sign of abating, and so dependency and together with that neutrality, must remain with India for many years to come.

India has actively participated in the non-aligned summits, the first of which was held at Belgrade and the second at Cairo. These were mainly concerned with the problems created by the

69 *Northern India Patrika*, 26 September 1981.
70 *The Pioneer*, 11 November 1981.

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cold war and those of the independent nations of Asia. The third 'non-aligned summit was held at Lusaka, capital of Zambia in September 1970. At this the subjects dicussed were : promotion of economic development, co-operation among non-aligned nations, and the carrying on of the struggle against colonialism and neo-colonialism. The Havana summit of non-aligned nations—the sixteenth—was held in October 1979. The disputes about Egypt and the Kampuchea were discussed, the Arabs demanding the suspensian of Egypt for signing the Camp David accord. In February 1981 almost 100 foreign ministers took part in a non-aligned conference at New Delhi. But it did not have much impact. S. Danabalan the foreign minister of Singapore said 'we must be honest enough to admit that our movement is disunited, is riven with disputes among the members, and exercises little or no influence on the course of world affairs.' Speaking at the silver jubilee celebrations of the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University on 30 October 1981, India's prime minister, Mrs Gandhi, said that 'non-alignment was not an objective but a policy in itself.' Departure from non-alignment would compromise the nation's long-term security. 'India' she said 'had no desire to get entangled in rivalries and conflicts of power blocs and their war preparations.... Had we built our defence forces at the behest of others or through gifts of armaments, the task of decision and policy making would have moved out of our hands.'[71]

Peace in the world, and goodwill to all peace loving nations has been India's objective. The wars she had to fight with China and Pakistan were not wars of aggression. She fought to defend her territorial integrity. That done she had no further interest in the wars and never pushed on her forces deliberately to conquer alien territory. India's efforts towards nuclear development have been greatly misunderstood, particularly in the US. India did not sign the non-proliferation treaty of 1970 by which non-nuclear countries agreed not to receive or make nuclear weapons, because it left five nations free to monopolise nuclear weapons. India wanted total nuclear disarmament. While India wished to use nuclear energy

71 *The Pioneer*, 31 October, 1981.

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for peaceful purposes, having stations at Tarapur (Bombay) Kotah (Rajasthan) and two more proposed at Narora (Uttar Pradesh) and Kalpakkam (Tamil Nadu), she firmly refused to make the atom bomb.

India's relations with Arab countries have been cordial, even though they have a pro-Pakistan leaning. Despite India's friendship towards them, so much so that she sent a representative to Rabat in 1969 to attend a meeting about the damage caused to a mosque, none of the Arab states supported India's stand on Bangladesh.

Although the British rule left many bitter memories, India stayed in the Commonwealth, and contributed effectively to the deliberations of the various Commonwealth conferences. British-Indian relations after independence have, by and large, been good. The last of the series of conferences was held at Canberra in October 1981 with forty-four Commonwealth nations participating. India's stand on a number of issues was endorsed at the conference. Pakistan's readmission (she had opted out after the British government's support to India on Bangladesh) was not even considered. India's viewpoint on the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan and of the Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea was accepted, viz. that such withdrawal could be affected only by devising political solutions and negotiated settlements. Thirdly, it was agreed that the Indian Ocean should be kept free from big power rivalry, and maintained as a zone of peace. Other decisions were the emphasis on North-South dialogue (which was also pursued in the ensuing Cancun summit) and the denouncing of the race in armaments between the two super-powers.

India's foreign policy has in principle remained the same as that formulated by Nehru after independence. Non-alignment is not a weak policy nor is it a policy of the weak. It needs in fact a lot of moral strength and will-power to resist befriending those who are powerful. To maintain a nation's dignity with honour, and its integrity without bloodshed, is a task which is as noble as it is difficult. India has succeeded in it by non-alignment and by pleading for a world in which there is peaceful co-existence : a world in which

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'Buried was the bloody hatchet ;
Buried was the dreadful warclub
Buried were all warlike weapons,
And the war-cry was forgotten.
There was peace among the nations'.[72]

Nevertheless, as Nehru himself declared, more significant than a nation's foreign policy is its internal affairs. As the sturdy radiant man wins more friends than the moping weakling, a strong progressive nation commands more admiration and respect than one which is always whining its weakness and rattling its beggar's bowl. Indian statesmen and policy makers should realise that a nation becomes strong by itself not by the strength of alliances. Foreign policy is a secondary affair ; the primary is the solving of one's own problems. More important by far than engrossing themselves in a foreign policy is, for Indian leaders at any rate, to follow the Biblical command, 'Set thine house in order.'[73]

A Note On The New Moore Island Dispute

The New Moore island, kown in Bangladesh as South Talpatty is a tiny crescent-shaped deposit of sand and slush just off the Indo-Bangladesh boundary. It was perhaps cast by high tidal waves. India came to know of the newly created island sometime in 1974 and Bangladesh four years after, and both of them claimed it as theirs. In May 1981 an Indian survey ship, INS *Sanahayak*, which had anchored off the island, was attacked by three Bangladesh gunboats. Apprehending trouble, India sent troops to the island. Bangladesh categorised this as 'naked aggression', and in protest rallies in Dacca, the Indian prime minister's effigy was burnt.

The Indo-Pakistan border towards the Sundarbans was delimited by Radcliffe Award in 1947 on the basis of a gazette notification of 25 January 1925, as being the mid-stream of the Haribhanga river 'till it meets the Bay.' As the island is

72 H.W. Longfellow, *Hiawatha.*
73 *Isaiah*, xxxviii, 1.

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nearly two kilometres off the Bay, India's stand is that the Radcliffe Award could not be the guideline for determining its ownership. India bases her claim on the 'median line principle'. According to this formula, which has already been adopted in similar disputes between India and other countries like Thailand, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, points are plotted on the sea which are equidistant from the outermost tips of the land territories of the contending countries. A line is then drawn along these points, and that is the median line. If this method is followed the New Moore island will fall towards the west, and on the Indian side. Bangladesh does not accept the median line principle on the strength of an observation made by the World Court in 1959 in the North Sea case that the equidistant line was 'not a principle in international law but merely a method'. Thus the law was according to her, vague on this point and no clear-cut convention had emerged. Instead, Bangladesh urged that the Haribhanga river creek should be the boundary. This would mean the island would be hers because the thrust of the Raimangal river (in Bangladesh) keeps pushing this creek more and more west. Bangladesh also charged India with going back on its word that a joint survey of the island would be made. She claimed that the Indian prime minister Morarji Desai, had visited Dacca in April 1979 and had then agreed to a joint survey. New Delhi denied this, and said the promise was to exchange data only, not to have any joint survey. The offer of exchange of information was repeated by the Indian minister for external affairs, P.V. Narasimha Rao, when he visited Dacca in August 1980. To this Bangladesh said, exchange of information would be fruitless for 'We don't trust your figures just as much as you don't trust ours.'

The island, being only 0.66 square miles during high tides, is apparently a very trivial matter for dispute. But Bangladesh fears that once India's claim is admitted she may draw another median line taking as reference the outermost tip of the island, and that might disturb the ownership of the continental shelf in India's favour. Another complication is that the West Bengal government began claiming in March 1980 that a new island, which it named Purbhasa 'the hope of the east,' had been discovered near the New Moore island, and in

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confirmation of the find produced satellite pictures showing a white glowing spot. India produced her own set of statellite picture which *did not* show this glow, and concluded that what Bangladesh had mistook for an island was really a cloud shadow.

A Note on the Farakka Barrage Dispute

With the formation of Bangladesh the problem arose of sharing the waters of the twenty rivers and tributaries, including the Ganga, between the two countries. This was entrusted to the Joint River Commission (JRC), a bilateral body. One of the vexing questions before the JRC was the crucial Farakka issue. The Farakka Barrage was commissioned in 1975. This disturbed the natural flow of the river, downstream when it entered Bangladesh. Since then Bangladesh is agitating for restoration of the natural flow of the river, which means tapping less of the Ganga water for India's use. On the contrary the barrage is withdrawing more water, at times in a strikingly erratic pattern. In the second fortnight of April 1978, for example, out of 35,000 cusecs 20,000 was withdrawn, when in the first fortnight of May the corresponding figures were 42,000 cusecs and 24,000 cusecs approximately.[74] The withdrawals have ranged between 20,000 cusecs to 40,000 cusecs during five months (January to May) of 1978.[75] According to an agreement signed in November 1977 Bangladesh was to get about 60 per cent of the flow in the dry season and in particularly bad years a minimum of 80 per cent of what it would be entitled to on the average. The agreement also provided for finding out means to augment the river flow.

The real problem is that the water is too meagre to fulfil the requirements of two countries. India's expanding needs for irrigation and drinking water-supply (specially in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh) have made it difficult to provide the promised water to Bangladesh. Another vital issue for India connected with the water flow is to protect the port of Calcutta, the gateway to

74 *India Today*, (ed.) Aroon Purie, 16-28 February 1981, p. 97 (chart).
75 Ibid.

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India's eastern sea-trade. Due to accumulation of silt in the river bed between Calcutta and the Sagar Islands heavy expenditure (about Rs 30 crore yearly) had to be incurred for dredging silt deposits. Ever since Farakka was commissioned, the additional water dropped into the Bhagirathi from the barrage has lessened silting and drastically reduced dredging costs (to Rs 12 crore). The Bangladesh view is that India should keep on spending what it did before 1975 for dredging operations, and instead divert most of the additional water for Bangladesh to revive its starved fields.

Bangladesh emphasises the implementation of the other aspect of the 1977 agreement, viz. the decision to augment the river flow. Its suggestion is to build 14 storage dams in the upper reaches of the Ganga where it flows into Nepal. Her argument is that Nepal being sparsely populated, the construction of these storage tanks will not cause much dislocation. The move to bring in Nepal would naturally not be favoured by India. Dacca went even to the extent of suggesting that China may be brought in too! This was to counter an Indian proposal that Bangladesh should build a 200 mile long link canal in order to divert the surplus water of the Brahmaputra to the Ganga. The proposal, however, overlooks two insurmountable difficulties. First, the building of the link canal is likely to displace almost 600,000 Bangladesh families whom it would be an uphill job to rehabilitate. Second, the canal would have to dug against the natural gradient of the land, and this would need so many booster pumps that the power requirement for them would be beyond the resources of Bangladesh.[76]

The Farakka dispute was discussed in April 1981 between India and Bangladesh (the third meeting since the dispute began) at Dacca, but no agreement could be reached, except that the matter may be discussed at a higher political level. The five year Farakka agreement expires in 1982. The Indian irrigation minister, Rao Birendra Singh, assured Bangladesh representatives that it would be reviewed six months before its expiry.

Meanwhile the Farakka dispute is causing a lot of resentment in Bangladesh against India. Dacca has now second

76 *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 16-18 February 1981, p. 96.

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thoughts on its promise to supply one trillion cubic feet of natural gas to India, and is negotiating with Japan for its liquefaction, storage and export to some other country. Bangladeshis are uniformly against India on the Farakka issue. What is more, this, along with other differences, is drawing Bangladesh steadily towards Pakistan.

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10

The Home Scene

'Now the Indian character is such that people see things in extremes. If something is good then they will praise it to the skies; if it is not good, then they think nothing can be worse . . . . Today one of the greatest obstacles is the cynicism of our intelligentsia, because no matter what is done they always look at it as something that is of no account. And this opinion is reflected in our press and it does have an influence on our people. In fact one of the strange things that has happened to our press is that it is so entirely divorced from the people. It does not express what the people as whole think.'

Indira Gandhi : Can India Survive ?[1]

The political developments after independence in Nehru's time and after his death in Shastri's; Tashkent and its tragic sequence and Indira Gandhi's rise to power with the brief Janata government interlude; have been briefly told in the preceding pages.[2]

Goa, Daman and Diu

The Portugese territories, Goa, Daman and Diu, the last

1 *India, The Speeches and Reminiscences of Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India*, Rupa & Co., 1975, p. 84.

2 See Chapter 7, *Independent India*, Political Parties, (The Congress Party).

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vestige of colonialism, were liberated on 10 December 1961. These possessions, which the Portugese government were loath to give up, were an anachronism after Indian independence. President Salazar of Portugal took the rigid stand that the Portugese possessions in India were not negotiable as they were an integral part of Portugal. Nehru tried persuasion, and when that failed, a bit of pressurisation by a non-violent *satyagraha* from the Indian side. But the Portugese were intractable, and opened fire on the peaceful demonstrations killing thirty of them. There remained no alternative except force. The territory was taken by the Indian army with hardly any resistance from the Portugese. The western powers tried to intervene by despatching a commission, but it was too late. Possession had irrevocably clinched the issue.

Sikkim

Sikkim's case was different, for there accession to India was more or less voluntary, the result of a kind of democratic movement. Under the treaty of 1861 the Gyalpo had accepted British suzerainty and Sikkim, as a consequence, had become a protectorate of the government of British India. In 1889 a Political Officer nominated by the government of India was stationed there, The Sikkim ruler, Maharaja now, was made a member of the Indian chamber of princes,

When India became independent a standstill agreement was signed with Sikkim continuing the same ralations which had existed between it and British India. The old agreement was replaced by a fresh treaty on 5 December 1950 by which Sikkim became a protectorate of the Indian Union.

In 1965 the ruler of Sikkim, who had married Hope Cook, an American lady, assumed the title of Chogyal (literally 'religious king'). He set about making Sikkim an independent kingdom with a flag and a national song of its own. He also sought to seek the membership of the United Nations.

Meanwhile internal conditions in Sikkim were deteriorating and there were hostile demonstrations by political groups. The Chogyal sought Indian assistance, and in April 1973 the Indian army had to intervene to protect him. In an agreement made

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subsequently between India and Sikkim on 8 May 1973 the Chogyal agreed to hold elections and usher in a popular government. There was to be a legislature elected every four years on adult suffrage. The Chogyal was to perform his functions as head of the state within the ambit of the constitution of Sikkim.

The elections envisaged by the 1973 agreement were held on 23 April 1974. Three parties contested it, namely the Sikkim State Congress, the Sikkim National Party and the Praja Sammelan. The Sikkim National Party under the leadership of Kazi Lhendup Dorji swept the polls capturing 31 out of the 32 seats in the National Assembly.

The newly elected Sikkim National Assembly was in favour of maintaining closer ties with India and proposed that Sikkim should become an associate state of India. Respecting the wishes of the people as expressed by their constituent assembly, the Indian government declared, by the thirty-sixth constitutional amendment, Sikkim to be an associate state. Soon, however, confrontations between the Chogyal and the National Assembly became frequent, as the Chogyal could not reconcile himself to the democratic process. On 10 April 1975 the Sikkim assembly passed a resolution to do way with the institution of the Chogyal and to integrate with the Indian Union. The Indian Parliament responded by admitting Sikkim to the Union of India. From 26 April 1975 Sikkim became the twenty-second state of India. In August 1979 president's rule was imposed and the Dorji cabinet was dissolved. In the ensuing general elections of October 1979 the Sikkim Parishad won by a wide margin and Nar Bahadur Bhandari, leader of the Parishad, became chief minister on 12 October 1979.

Administration After Independence

The Machinery of Administration

The administrative set up after independence was practically the same as that left by the British, except that there was a change in names. The Indian Civil Service was renamed the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), the Indian Police (IP),

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the Indian Police Servcie (IPS) the district magistrate got the name of ziladhish ('the ruler of the district') and later the more humble ziladhikari ('officer of the district'), the 'lekhpal' became the 'patwari', and so on. The name changing campaign went on and on, extending to street and place names. Road signs appeared with '*marg*' instead of 'street', and statues of Queen Victoria, 'Malika' as she was popularly known, were lifted from their pedestal to make way for national leaders. Apart from all this, there was little change in the re-structuring of the main services, particularly those entrusted with law and order and collection of revenue. At the tahsil, the old tahsildar held the fort with his army of patwaris and qanungoes and subordinate officers to assist him. There was the inspector of police and the sub-inspector and the officer in charge of the police station (the SO). The district continued to work under the district magistrate who was a kind of co-ordinating head, the medical services under the civil surgeon (later chief medical officer), and the judicial service under the district judge (now 'nyayadhish'). The district superintendent of police (SP) was the police head. Over the district magistrates the old divisional commissioners (renamed 'mandalayukts') supervised. The technical services continued to be manned by the chief engineer (mukhya abhiyanta) at the head with the superintending engineers (adhikshana abhiyantas) and executive engineers (adhishasi abhiyantas) at the district level.

The British colonial system of government, with all its faults and virtues, has thus been more or less adopted in independent India. As U.N.Dhebar, one time president of the Indian National Congress says: 'The two currents the feudal one and the colonial one—have met in free India's first administration. Their strong features and weak features—features of personal loyalty, features of dependent thinking, features of rigidity, features of superfluous functioning, features of hierarchical thinking, features of distrust and class thinking have been intermixed. Free India's first administration is not beginning on a clean slate'.[3]

3 *India Since* 1947 (ed.) A. Chakrabarti, Allied, 1947, p. 164-5.

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After thirty-three years of freedom the state of Indian administration remains the same, except for the opening of a number of new departments which have multiplied with Parsonian vengence. Some of these are, of course, essential in a welfare state, as for example planning, food and agriculture, social services and so forth. But there are others less known, with plush furniture and tall buildings, well staffed but with little work, leeches on the country's economy. The gap between public servants and the people remains wide as ever. In fact with the years it has become wider. In the early years of independence, district magistrates and their subordinate officers, following the British practice, camped on the outskirts of villages in tents. Now they pay flying visits to the network of inspection houses scattered over the countryside. Communication with the people, more than to 70 per cent of whom live in villages, is therefore miserably inadequate.

1. The Bureaucracy and District Administration

With independence and partition a number of British and Muslim members of the old ICS (Indian Civil Service) left India. Out of 1,064 only 451 were left in the service. Since then, with the renaming of the service as the IAS, there were 2,725 officers in 1969-70. A study conducted by an Indian research worker V. Subramaniam, revealed that up to 1957-63 the professional middle class formed the bulk of IAS officers. Another study made in 1970-1 revealed that most of them came from the high castes and the high born. The caste distribution was as follows: Brahmins 27.5 per cent, Vaishyas 16.2 per cent, Rajputs 8.3 per cent, Kayasthas 7.5 per cent, Jats 1.2 per cent and scheduled castes and tribes 15 per cent.[4]

But this is no longer the case. More and more persons competing for the services belong to the villages and come from the poorer classes. A system of reservation for the scheduled and backward castes and for tribes, ensures that a fair proportion are from the lower castes as well.

4 C.P. Bhambhri, *Administrators in a Changing Society*, National, 1971, p. 111.

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The question regarding attention to public complaints by government officers is rather complicated. Every officer, particularly if he deals with a department like food and civil supplies, a head of a municipal corporation, a district magistrate and so forth, is expected to set aside some fixed time for listening to public complaints. But in India everything else may remain fixed, but not time. So in practice all time is complaint time, and it is interspersed with files, discussions and meetings. Then there are wads of complaints which pour in through the post. These are usually of three varieties. The first contain genuine names and addresses of the complainants. The second have false names and fake addresses—these are classed as pseudonymous. Then there are the anonymous complaints which as signed as 'Citizen' 'The public' or simply with an untelligible mark. Of all public complaints, the genuine variety are seldom more than 20 per cent. Though government take notice only of genuine complaints, the tendency more and more in practice, is to inquire into all of them. All that a disgruntled person—usually some one whom the officer has punished for some fault—has to do, is to put about four or five sheets of paper into a typewriter and having typed out an invective against the erring boss drop them into the post, addressing copies to several high authorities. Thus slowly injected into the torturous government machinery, these frivolous complaints keep quite a bit of it busy for quite a time. Even when the complaint is finally 'filed' from all these quarters, the complaint has succeeded at almost no cost (just the postage stamps on the envelopes) in ruining the luckless officer's reputation.

An interesting and vital factor in administration is the relation existing between the bureaucracy and politicians. U.N. Dhebar narrates how Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel used to deal with his Civilians:

'He made up his mind on the policy aspects, discussed them threadbare with the public servants concerned, and when he was sure that his point was fully digested by them, he left them free to work out the details and implement his decision. He interfered only when he found that anything was going wrong or implementation was getting unduly delayed. On his part, he relied upon the services for implementation and on their part

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they relied upon the Sardar for a clear and broad outline of the methodology.'[5]

Observing that 'Indian politicians have been careful by and large to see that their partymen do not interfere with the loyalty of administration,' Dhebar admits that 'there are glaring exceptions also.' He suggests two measures to circumvent this tendency '(i) Services should have an approach to some authority to explain their difficulties in this regard, should such a thing happen. The President of India can be one such agency, (ii) Those who interfere with the services should be liable to law in some way or the other.'[6] Noble advice no doubt, but difficult to implement. Approach to a higher authority, say a minister (one can hardly approach the President for such trivial matters), means a kind of complaint against the partyman concerned and is sure to make him all the more hostile. Besides, ministers and politicians in authority are hardly in a position to chide their own partymen—those very persons who have brought them into power. Political pressurisation is often verbal or on the telephone and there can hardly be a law which can punish it except in rare cases in which a politician is so foolhardy as to make a recommendation in legal matters and invite contempt proceedings. So the merry-go-round of pressurisation (*sifarish*, as it is mildly called) goes on, keeping the politician happy and the bureaucrat helpless.

The gulf between the politician and the bureaucrat has grown wider because of several reasons. The politician's measure for things is utility and popularity, the bureaucrat's propriety and following strictly the rules. With the politician it all begins with the voter or the person who has secured him the votes. He wants something done and he is not bothered whether it *can* be done or not. That is the headache of the people's representative and he in turn gets rid of it by passing it on to the minister. The minister's acquired headache is a very real one and it has no easy solution. Having delved somewhat more than the MLA in the intricacies of administration, he has a hard time debating whether what he is required to do is right or wrong. If he decides the

5 *India Since 1947* (ed.) A. Chakrabarti, Allied Publishers, 1967, p. 166.
6 *Ibid*, pp. 171-2.

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thing is wrong, he has the choice of telling the MLA point-blank that it can't be done and thereby incur his wrath, or ask his subordinate the bureaucrat, to do it. With the bureaucrat, unfortunately, the story does not start with a human being—the voter, but with a wad of rules which his 'section officer' has delightfully dumped on his table. To the tortured bureaucrat the rules are a kind of Damocles's sword, for if he departs from them he is likely to be asked by someone inquiring later into the bona-fides of his action, why he did so. Maybe then the minister is no longer there, or if he is, he is not likely to remember anything about the matter, for obviously no one can recollect what he told another years ago. In any case it would hardly be much of a defence for breaking the rules. As the Indian prime minister, Indra Gandhi, said in a convocation address at Roorkee University 'The civil servant goes by precedent and notions of administrative feasibility. The politician is dominated by considerations of popular acceptance'.[7]

The politician moves in the world of people, while the bureaucrat moves in the maze of files. Even when he meets the people it can never be on the level of confidence enjoyed by the politician. Therefore the politician's viewpoint is more realistic than that of the bureaucrat, and more likely to be right in general matters involving the public. That is why in C.P. Bhambhri's study made in 1970-1,83.7 per cent of administrative officers considered 'politicians to be an important link between the government and the people.'[8] But the bureaucrat can take an overall view, which the politician, who is only interested in his area (*kshetra*), cannot. In the study referred to, 86.2 per cent of respondents were of the view 'Politicians care more about their area rather than the development of the country as a whole'.[9]

More than 70 per cent of India's people live in villages. The politicians therefore are for the most part drawn from the rural areas; the bureaucrats from the urban. This also gives the politician a distinct advantage, for most of the problems the

7 *India*, Rupa & Co., 1975, p. 69.
8 C.P. Bhambhri, *Administrators in a Changing Society*, National, 1972, p. 135.
9 *Ibid.*

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bureaucrat deals with are rural based. Incidentally it makes a great difference between the two in their mental outlook, manners, habits and so forth. The politician is essentially a man of the countryside, the bureaucrat a man of the town.

Apart from the district magistrate, who is usually a kind of co-ordinating officer, and responsible particularly for collection of land revenue and (along with the superintendent of police) for law and order, there are officers of other departments at the district level as for example the technocrats, the district supply officer, the district industries officer, the district agricultural officer and so forth. A marked feature of district administration after independence is the discord between administrators and technocrats. The technocrats grudge their being like bossed over by administrators. They do not like administrators interfering in a field in which they know practically nothing. The hostility is nothing now. The prime minister had a word of encouragement to the technocrats when she was addressing the staff and the students of a university of technicians :

'In spite of numerous attempts at reform, the administration still tends to be hierachical and status-bound. Pay and power are equated, instead of pay and utility. It is odd that the greatest doctors and engineers in the country, who would be rated as leaders of the profession and who save lives or add permanent assets to the nation, can rarely hope to receive the pay or status of secretaries of ministries. The brightest of our young men and women choose engineering and medicine. If they happen to go into government, they are very soon overtaken by the general administrator. This must change and I am trying to change it. The administrative system must reflect an individual's contribution to human welfare and economic gain.'[10]

But immediately after, the prime minister hastened to add :

'Having made the point, let me hasten to correct any apprehension that the technologist is ipso facto and in every way superior to the professional administrator or politician. The man trained to be a technologist may not necessarily be competent to decide on matters outside his specialisation. He

10 *India, the Speeches and Reminiscences of Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India*. Rupa & Co., 1975, pp. 69-70.

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may not be the best person to judge the social or political cost.

'A great deal of administration consists in taking political decisions and in the handing of men. The instincts and talents of leadership do not automatically flow from training in technology. Technology as such has no answers to political problems. Some scientists and technologists certainly possess qualities of social leadership of the highest order, but the abilities of most remain confined to their fields of specialisation'.[11]

Really speaking, the spheres of the administrator and the technologist are quite separate inasmuch as it is the job of the latter to give technical advice and to execute and supervise work of a technical nature like constructing bridges, roads dams, canals and buildings. The administrator gets the sanction for the work, the funds and has to remove bottlenecks like procuring cement and other, material, steel and so forth. The clash does not occur in the work. It has a more personal basis. Often the administrator tends to treat the engineer as an inferior, not as an associate. The impression is strengthened both by the people and the politicians who feel they can get more out of the administrator than from the technocrat. The status, scales of pay and the importance of the post are all in favour of the administrator. Although something has been done at the centre to remove these disparities, they persist more than ever in various state governments.

Over the district officers there are the regional ones whose work is mostly supervision and co-ordination, as for example the regional food controller, the deputy or joint directors of industry and planning, the divisional commissioners and the range deputy inspector general of police. Than there are the various heads of departments, usually at the headquarters of the states. Similarly supervision of accounts is carried out by the accountant general and his subordinate officers. Both in the civil as well as the defence services the pattern remains much the same. The subordinate officers in India are over-supervised. For example on the revenue side the ladder of supervision going downwards is the revenue board, the commissioner, the district magistrate (often assisted by additional dis-

11 *Ibid*, p. 70.

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trict magistrates th ub-divisional officer, the tahsildar, the naib-tahsildar, the area qanungo and the lekhpal (old patwari).[12]

The number of inspections and inspecting officers of some organisations, as the police stations and tashils, has become so tremendous that the inspections tend to be mere routine and formality. It becomes practically impossible to follow them up.

2 Municipal Administration

Local self-government ordinarily means 'the adminisatration of a locality—a village, a town, a city or any other area smaller than the state—by a body representing the local inhabitants, possessing a fairly large amount of autonomy, raising at least a part of its revenue through local taxation and spending its income on services which are regarded as local and, therefore, as distinct from state and central services'.[13] Local self-government existed in almost all villages, which had self-governing bodies of their own. Kautilya's *Arthshastra* (300 B.C.) mentions village elders, and city superintendents in towns who, though appointed by the state, discharged a vast variety of functions. The Uttaramerur inscriptions of 919 and 9 1 mention committees which governed the village, the method of their selection, conditions of their membership and so forth. Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador in the court of the Mauryan emperor, Chandragupta wrote in 300 B.C. about Pataliputra, the Mauryan capital, mentioning six bodies of five persons in each, who managed the city and performed various functions which resemble those of modern municipal corporations.

Mughal towns were administered by kotwals, but they were strictly government officers. Still, the heads of guilds exercised a certain amount of local influence. In the villages however, though the Mughals left the system as it was, they did nothing to develop or preserve it. The Mughals, in fact, being essentially city minded, never bothered about villages.

The British administration was centralised, and people in

12 As in Uttar Pradesh. For other states the pattern is much the same.

13 *Local Government in India* (ed.) M. Venkataragaiya and M. Pattabhiram, Allied Publishers, 1969, Introduction p. 1.

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villages had to depend on external agencies for most things including settlement of disputes, which hitherto were left to them. Village functionaries were no longer nominated by village folk, but became paid servants of the government. Up to the mutiny of 1857 the British conquerers were interested only in maintaining law and order and collecting revenue. Welfare measures were completely neglected. Even when, after 1861 local institutions were introduced, the villages were studiously omitted, and panchayats got attention only in the second decade of the twentieth contury. But by that time the structure of the village community had become too weak for panchayats to be successful. There was no real government in the towns.

With the coming of independence, local self-government received an impetus. Gandhi advocated a return to the villages and wished each village to be self-sufficient in food, clothing and other essential facilities. The Indian constitution adopted an article for the re-vitalisation of village panchayats. The five-year plans also emphasised village development and local self-government in towns. The Community Development Movement which was inaugurated in 1952, urged that intitiative of developing local areas should come from the people living in it, and they should not look to the government for spoon-feeding. Community d velopment blocks were marked out, each under an officer designated the block development officer (BDO), with a team of extension officers working under him. Nominated advisory bodies were created in the first instance, but later in 1958 on the recommendation of the Balwantray Mehta Committee these were replaced by statutory bodies elected by local inhabitants. The panchayat samities and zila parishads were thus established. The Santhanam Committee later suggested the working of panchyat raj institutions under a district panchayat commissioner or the district collector. For control at the state level it suggested a panchayati raj board whose report would be placed before the state legislature. Zila parishads ultimately came under the leadership of an elected representative who was known as its non-official chairman. The organisation of zila parishads and panchayats will be considered in detail later on.[14]

14 See next section of this chapter, Panchayati Raj.

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Since the villages where most of the Indian people lived remained neglected almost throughout the Mughal and the British rule, the government gave priority to rural reconstruction after independence. At the same time, however, during the thirty-three years of freedom there has been a steady shift of population from the villages to the towns. The percentage of urban population rose from 11.2 per cent in 1921 to 19.9 in 1971, while that of rural India declined from 88.8 per cent to 80.1 Between 1971 and 1981 the population of major towns in India has shown a marked increase. That of Delhi for example increased from 36,47,023 to 52,27,730 and of Greater Bombay from 59,70,575 to 80,02,759. By 1947 the urban areas were constituted into municipalities of various sizes. The biggest were the Corporations of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. Next to them were the borough municipalities of Bombay province. Then there were those of other provinces including those in Bombay Presidency. Last were the semi-urban localities administered by town committees or by notified area committees, more subject to state control than other urban local bodies.

The members of these bodies were elected by a franchise which was wide enough, although it did not extend to all adults. A number of nominated and ex-officio members were included, particularly in the district boards. In some provinces institutions like the chambers of commerce, university senates and trade unions, as well as the minorities, were included.

The state of the municipalities was miserable inasmuch as they could not fully collect their taxes and did not get any appreciable assistance from the government.[15] Their work was restricted mainly to sanitation, public health, medical relief, roads and a few public works. In some provinces even these meagre tasks were narrowed down by the government's taking away for itself some of them.

In the post-independence period problems relating to urban local bodies did not get the same attention as those in rural areas. Many of the defects existing in them continued. The third five-year plan acknowledged that 'most municipal adminis-

15 The tax sources were taxes on property, trade and persons, and fees and licences.

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trations were not strong enough to carry out their functions', and that they needed strengthening. That was all. There was no comprehensive scheme to 'solve the problems faced by them beyond locating industries in urban areas and controlling land values with which housing was intimately connected. The plan however provided five crore of rupees for the preparation of master plans of metropolitan cities, state capitals, port towns, industrial centres and resource regions. Rs 50 lakh were earmarked in the plan for urban community development but it remained unutilised for a number of years, and it was only in 1965-6 that some pilot projects were started.

The Rural-Urban Committee (1963) which made a study of the expenditure pattern of 100 local bodies, brought out a report in 1966 in which it made some significant observations on their general working :

'The study has revealed the gross inadequacy of municipal services in all classes of towns, except in a few cities, where the per capita expenditure on public health and sanitation is less than one rupee annually. Waterworks exist in 33 of them and only 100 have underground sewerage. Most of the medium and small towns have no drainage system. Even in the largest towns there exist open drains, and in sizable cities like Gorakhpur, Hyderabad, Kanpur and Lucknow nearly 40 per cent of the streets are lacking in proper drainage facilities. In Hyderabad, Kanpur and Lucknow, more than 60 per cent of the houses have no connection with sewers. In Calcutta, one latrine serves 30 to 50 persons. In Guntur, Ludhiana and Tiruchirapalli, where protected water supply has existed for 55-60 years, the per capita daily availability of water is as low as 13, 15 and 24 gallons respectively. In Shahjahanpur, where the municipal board has been in existence for about 300 years, the basic amenity of protected piped water-supply was absent until redently and the people had to depend entirely on private wells. It is evident that the essential obligatory duties are not being performed properly [by even bigger urban local bodies. The position in small bodies is worse'.[16]

1 *Local Government in India* (ed.) M. Vankatarangaiya and M. Pattabhiram, Allied, 1969, p. 39.

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The Committee noted that the financial resources of the bodies were dismally inadequate and the state governments did very little to augment them. Very few of the larger urban centres had effective town planning schemes, with the result that all sorts of buildings sprang up in a most disorganised manner. The status of a corporation, the report said, should be given only to cities having a minimum population of 5 lakh and an annual income of a crore of rupees or more. Medium sized councils with a strength from 15 to 45 members were favoured, and corporations with not more than 50 councillors. No urban body ought to be allowed, according to the committee, unless it could provide minimum facilities like potable water-supply, street lighting, drainage, surfaced roads and streets, sanitation, conservancy and arrangements for disposal of refuse. The Committee felt that these facilities could be provided only by towns with a minimum population of 20,000.

The growth of slums is another problem which has vexed municipalities and corporations. The matter was considered by the Advisory Committee on Slum Clearance (1958) which recommended that the work might be taken up in six cities to start with; viz. Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Delhi, Kanpur and Ahmedabad. The work would be co-ordinated by a central ministry and the cost met by a terminal tax on goods and passengers carried by rail as well as by increased financial allotment for the work by government. A scheme was launched for clearance and improvement of slum areas and for rehabilities of slum dwellers whose income did not exceed Rs 350 per month. This was a centrally sponsored scheme to begin with, but from 1 April 1969 it was transferrrd to states.

In 1972 a central scheme for environmental improvement in slum areas was launched in ten cities, and in 1973-4 it was extended to ten more cities.[17] A sum of Rs 20.23 crore was released to the states by the centre for 854 projects. From April 1974 the scheme was transferred to the states to be implemented as their minimum needs programme. Gradually

17 Initially the scheme was for Ahmedabad, Bombay, Bangalore, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kanpur, Lucknow, Madras, Nagpur and Pune. Later the ten cities added were Calcutta, Cochin, Cuttack, Gauhati, Indore, Jaipur, Ludhiana, Patna, Rohtak and Srinagar.

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the scheme was extended to all urban areas irrespective of size and population.

Urban development also started as a central scheme and continued so till March 1969, after which it was transferred to the state governments. The fourth plan allocated Rs 73.47 crore for it and the fifth Rs 90 crore. The 1978-9 plan had a provision of Rs 752 crore for urban development. Other steps taken were : (1) The establishment of the Town and Country Planning Organisation to advise on all matters relating to urban and regional development. (2) The Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act 1976, which enabled the state governments to acquire vacant land in excess of the ceiling limit. About 1,110 hectares of land has been acquired in Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh under this Act. (3) The development of the area round about Delhi, India's capital city. This was about 30,000 square miles and falling in Haryana Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, apart from the union territory of Delhi. Up to the end of 1978-79 about Rs 16.18 crore had been sanctioned as loan assistance to the state governments concerned. (4) Development of metropolitan cities. Under this scheme the central government would assist the state governments. An outlay of Rs 149.51 crore was provided in the first plan period. In 1975-6 loan assistance of Rs 18.89 crore was given to 13 cities. In 1976-7, Rs 29.25 crore was given to 17 cities, and in 1978-9, Rs 39.19 crore for 31 cities. The scheme was discontinued from 1 April 1979. Instead, another central sector scheme, the Integrated Development of Small and Medium Towns was introduced for developing towns with a population below one lakh. In 1979-80 projects for 31 towns were approved and an instalment of Rs 2.25 crore released for them. In addition it is proposed to develop 200 such towns during 1980-85 at a cost of about Rs 200 crore. Rs. 1·44 crore out of this was released till 31 December 1980 for 11 sanctioned projects.[18] (5) Housing: starting from the first plan up to the end of the fourth Rs 469.99 crore was spent in the public sector on various social housing schemes. Rs. 1,183

18 *India 1981*, Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, p. 401-2.

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crore have been provided in the sixth plan (1978-83) as compared to Rs 600.92 crore in the fifth. But this included Rs 425 crore for rural housing as well. The Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) sanctioned in September 1981, 91 new housing projects spread over 48 towns and cities in 15 states and several villages in the states of Bihar, Orissa and Karnataka. The project cost of newly sanctioned projects was Rs 68 crore for which HUDCO's loan commitment was Rs 50 crore. These projects will enable construction of over 58,00 residential dwellings, 61 non-residential buildings and development of 500 plots.[19] The emphasis has been on providing shelter to the weaker and low income groups.[20]

The main hurdle for the effective working of urban local bodies is poor financial resources. This point has been repeatedly emphasised by commissions and committees, as for example the Local Finance Enquiry Committee 1950, the Taxation Inquiry Commission 1953-5 and the Rafiq Zakaria Committee 1963. The Rafiq Zakaria Committee favoured grants-in-aid to local bodies rather than assigned or shared revenue. Its main recommendations were :

1. Five-year city development programmes. 2. The setting up of a statutory development board in each state. 3. A central valuation department in each state for proper assessments. 4. A separate cadre for municipal employees. 5. The fixing of a standard percentage of minimum collections failing which the supersession of the municipality if the defect persists, and 6. Replacement of octroi by some other form of taxation (to remove the ills of the octroi system). There were many recommendations about the ways in which tax realisation could be improved and rationalised, and about borrowings and loans.

Despite attempts to improve the finances of corporations and municipalities, this remains their weakest point. For the myriad duties they are expected to perform—some of which are obligatory, like public health and sanitation, medical relief, public works, education, development and so forth—the funds at their disposal are always short. The result is that they have

19 *The Pioneer*, 2 October 1981.
20 *India 1981*, Publication Division.

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to depend on aids, grants, loans and foreign assistance to a large extent. These are erratic and even so fulfil only a small part of their requirements. Most municipalities and corporations fail to realise even a major portion of their taxes and there is an overall limit beyond which they cannot tax. In fact most of the taxable income of urban citizens goes to the government and only a very little filters down to local bodies. The majority of corporations remain as bad as that of Hamelin, which could offer the Pied Piper only fifty guilders of the thousand promised. Most agencies which work for the corporations find it difficult to get their bills paid up. And that leads us to another damaging defect in the performance of India's urban local bodies—corruption. Although corruption is by no means confined to them, it has become the corporations's carbuncle. The particularly vulnerable areas are public health and sanitation, taxation particularly octroi, and public works. In octroi, for example, apart from leakage in the dues there is a system of hush money charged at a flat rate of Rs 2 per vehicle. This constitutes the spoils for the octroi staff. The municipal sweepers work for private households and give bribe money from their wages to get their attendance marked on the rolls. On paper they are whole time workers for the corporation, but in this way they find time to earn some money on their own. There is the adulteration racket in which provisions in the market keep on being adulterated and yet when samples are drawn by the sanitary staff the chemical examiner finds them pure! Trucks carrying garbage, officially record fewer trips than they make and the diesel or petrol saved is sold off in the black market.

Another retarding factor is inefficiency (which again is shared by departments other than the local bodies). Open manholes, patched bumpy and dug up roads littered with rubbish, stinking public lavatories, chipped and broken pavements, encroachments, unauthorised hawkers, roadside stalls choking up sidewalks and sprawling on roads, open drains with stagnant vilely smelling slush, herds of cattle on busy roads between which traffic torturously squeezes through, street tubelights blinking eternally in agony till they die out, strary dogs some of them with horrid sores, occasional dead animals lying on

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streets—a horrible mess which the corporation's carts move only when the stench become unbearable—these are familiar sights in most corporations and municipal towns. Then there is the problem of periphery habitations (*bustees*), a consequence of migration from villages to urban areas or of town expansion. The inhabitants of these, bereft of proper lighting, drainage, potable drinking water and pukka roads, keep clamouring for inclusion within the corporation, while the municipal bosses dread to take the responsibility which, with their slender resources, it is impossible for them to discharge. Almost all municipalities are plagued with the twin ills of diminishing purses and expanding cities. Every facility which they are expected to provide is being stretched to breaking point. Unfortunately the towns are pockets of fewer votes and the politician is not much interested in them. But urbanisation is the inevitable outcome of progress. As population swells, and education, prosperity and enlightenment increase, large villages swiftly turn into small townships. In the long run there is no escape from providing India's expanding population, whether they are in the towns or in the villages, the basic civic amenities, viz. planned houses, decent roads, potable drinking water, sanitation and conservancy, lighting, schools and hospitals.

(3) The Village Panchayats and Rural Local Government

(i) *Rural Development*

It has already been mentioned that the community development programme, which now forms part of the rural development programme, was launched on 2 October 1952. There are now over 5,000 development blocks in India which are engaged in improving the living, resources and facilities for the peasants with their own active participation. The highest priority is given to agriculture; other important items being communications, health, sanitation, housing, education, rural employment, welfare of rural women and children, and cottage and small-scale industries. A community development block looks to the needs of about a hundred villages spread over

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approximately 620 square miles with a population of about one hundred thousand.[21] They were financed by the central government till 1966, and thereafter transferred to the states.

Lately some new programmes have been introduced in the development blocks. These are : (1) The Small Farmers Development Agencies (SFDA) catering to farmers with unirrigated land holdings of 2.5 to 5 acres, and the Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Agencies (MFAL) for assisting those having less than 2.5 acres. If the land is irrigated the limits of the beneficiaries's holdings is halved. There were about 168 agencies of both kinds in existence when the fifth plan was initiated. Liberal subsidies, loans (short, medium and long term) and bank credits are given to these farmers. Rs 2.50 lakh annually for each block has been allotted in the mid-term plan (1979-83) for the SFDA programme. (2) Minor irrigation programmes. These help all small and marginal farmers, whether covered by the abovesaid special schemes or not. During 1979-80 Rs 870.30 lakh had been approved for such assistance. (3) Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP). This is spread over 557 community development blocks in 74 districts located in 13 states. The programme covers areas with factors like a high frequency of drought, erratic rainfall and poor irrigation facilities. The idea is to restore the ecological balance by afforestation, improvement of range lands, having shelter belts and wind breaks, control of grazing, stabilising sand-dunes and so forth. An expenditure of about Rs 19 crore was incurred till September 1979 in 1979-80 on this programme.[22] (4) Livestock production programme. This provides employment to the weaker sections and the rural masses, on a subsidy-cum loan basis. The scheme covers 183 districts and 268 projects, benefiting 2,56,300 persons (including those of the scheduled castes and tribes). (5) Integrated Rural Development (IRD). As the name implies, the programme is for integrating the various special programmes; but those areas are also covered which have been left out by them. The object is to generate additional employment and raise the income level of target groups.

21 *India 1980*, Publications Division, Government of India, p. 215.
22 *India 1980*, Publications Division, Government of India, p. 249.

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The family, not the individual, is adopted as the unit. So the programme assists identified families to cross the poverty line by providing them a package of schemes. 2,300 IRD blocks were selected for the programme in 1978-9, 2,000 from special programme areas and 300 from others. These have been respectively allocated 5 to 10 lakh of rupees and Rs 2 lakh (to be enhanced to three subsequently). Rs 60,000 per block has been allotted for conducting a bee-line survey of households in non-special programme areas. Availability of bank credit is a vital factor for the success of the IRD programmes. (6) Applied Nutrition Programme. This is in collaboration with the UNICEF and aims at instructing the rural people on improved nutrition. It is particularly for children below five years, and expectant and nursing mothers. It covers 2,351 blocks, out of which 23 are for intensive work. In 1978-9 the outlay was Rs 12.99 crore.

Apart from these programmes, there are schemes for rural employment in *khadi* and village industries and for rural artisans, the Food for Work Programme, and schemes for involvement of village women in rural reconstruction and agricultural marketing. Efforts have been made to involve industrial and mercantile houses in various programmes of rural development.

(ii) *Panchayati Raj*

The name 'panchayati raj' was given to the new Indian system of rural local government by Jawaharlal Nehru. It was introduced in 1959 as a three-tier structure at the village, block and district levels. The states were free to make changes in this according to their own views and needs. Free India's constitution contained a directive (article 40) : 'The state should take steps to organise village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government.' Panchayats were revived with independence, after hundreds of years, for neither the Muslim rulers nor the British did anything to keep them going.

At the base of the three-tier structure there was the village panchayat elected by adult suffrage; then there was the panchayat

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samiti consisting of indirectly elected members—usually the chairmen—from the panchayats; and finally there was the apex body, the elected zila parishad, consisting mainly of the chairmen of the samities. In some of the states nyaya panchayat or village courts are functioning for providing inexpensive and speedy justice to villagers. Panchayat raj bodies are closely linked together and representation is given in them to special sections like backward classes, co-operative societies and women. The Balvantray Mehta committee had recommended 'the setting up of elected and organically linked democratic bodies at the village, block and district levels and passing on to these bodies planning and developmental work hitherto done at the state level. Accepting this recommendation the National Development Council directed action on these lines. The Central Council of Local Self-government reviewed the action taken in its fifth meeting at Hyderabad in 1959, and while admitting 'there was the fullest scope for trying out various patterns and alternatives,' it emphasised 'what is most important is the genuine transfer of power to the people'.[23] A committee under the chairmanship of Ashok Mehta was set up in 1977 to review the functioning of panchayat raj institutions and suggest structural changes. Its recommendations are under consideration of the government.

Panchayati raj now covers all the states of India except Meghalaya, Nagaland and 23 out of 31 districts in Bihar. Village panchayats exist in all the union territories except Mizoram and Lakshadweep. There are in all 2,28,593 village panchayats now (covering a population of 44.13 crore) as against 83,00,0 in 1950-1 and 1950-1 and 117,600 in 1955-6. In addition there are 4,478 panchayat samities and 252 zila parishads.[24]

The sizes of the village panchayat vary. The elections to them are often decided on the basis of caste. But thereafter the popularity of the sarpanch, who is the head of the panchayat, depends on the amenities he is able to provide in his village. Caste is

23 *Readings on Panchayati Raj* (ed.) George Jacob, National Institute of Community Development, 1967, Editor's Note, p. vi.

24 *India 1981*, Publications Division, Government of India, p. 248.

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also an important factor in the samities. Another trend is the passing of the leadership of panchayats to younger persons, even though the older element has come to remain.

The panchayats are responsible for agricultural production, rural industries, medical relief, maternity and child welfare, common grazing grounds, village roads, tanks and wells and the maintenance of sanitation. Panchayat samities prepare and implement plans for their areas. They have duties to perform in the fields of primary education, health, sanitation and communication. They also supervise over the panchayats. The functions and powers of the zila parishads vary from state to state. In some states, as for example in Madras and Mysore it is a co-ordinating body exercising general control over the working of the panchayat samities and advising the government of the implementation of development schemes. In Rajasthan it is just a supervisory and co-ordinating body without exercising any specific executive functions. In Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra it has specific executive functions in many fields. It is particularly powerful in Maharashtra, with a very wide range of functions and considerable funds. The panchayati samiti there functions as the the zila parishad's regional body.

Panchayati raj bodies tend to devote more attention to social services and public works (as constructing roads, drains, culverts, village *ghats* and lighting), than to development of agriculture, animal husbandry and other economic programmes. Even on the social plane the panchayats have not been able to bring about any great transformation. Changes in the mode of living have resulted more from the opening up of villages by better transport and the introduction of amenities like the transistor, TV, electricity etc. than on the initiative of panchayats. Due to the links of village panchayats with panchayat samities and zila parishads, they are to a large extent swayed by party politics and become tools in the hands of aspiring politicians. To add to this, they are often dominated by big landowners, money-lenders, merchants and so forth. They retain therefore, little of their original democratic character.

The gaon samaj or gram sabha is the root of the three-tier structure of the panchayat. This consists of all adult members of the village. The body becomes too unwieldy for decision

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making. Attendance at the gram sabha meetings is poor. Controversies evoke more interest than constructive work. The Diwakar Committee on Gram Sabhas, a study team constituted by the government of India went into the reasons for the failure of the gram sabha. According to the Committee's report (1963) these were mainly lack of interest; lack of a common accessible avenue and punctuality; lack of adequate information about the date of the meeting (announcement is made usually by beating drums by village chowkidars); and poor attendance often caused by deliberate absence of those opposed; reluctance to make proper publicity by the ruling group and apathy of the village people who doubt the gram sabha's utility.

One of the objectives of panchayati raj is to foster institutions such as the mahila mandala (women's organisation) and the nava yuvak sangh (youth's association). In this too they have failed. There are also conflicts between office bearers such as the pradhan (president of the panchayat samiti) and the vikas ahikari (block development officer) which retard their functioning.

The greatest weakness of the panchayat raj institutions (as in the case of urban local bodies), is their poor finances. Most of their funds consist of government grants alone. They are very reluctant to collect taxes. A study made by a team in 1963 found that many of the panchayats advanced the argument that 'as the central and state governments were levying a number of taxes, panchayats should not be compelled to tax the people.' The team also noticed 'the deplorable failure of collection of taxes and dues' on the part of the panchayats.[25] The conclusion drawn after a study of panchayati raj institutions in five provinces, viz. Assam, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh was; 'In practice, the panchayats in the first three states have levied taxes; but in the remaining states they are reluctant to exercise this power. Thus, out of 7,393 panchayats in Rajasthan, only about 1,000 had levied any taxes up to 1962.[26] Although the Santhanam study team's report was that

25 Henry Maddick, *Panchayati Raj*, Longman, 1970, p. 123, *op. cit.*, (Santhanam Finance Report).

26 Ibid, p. 118.

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substantial local contributions were available to panchayats for local works such as roads, public latrines, primary health centres panchayat ghars (committee rooms) etc., this does not seem to be the case. A bulletin of the Reserve Bank of India (January 1961) put down such contributions as 34.9 per cent during the first plan, 40.8 per cent in 1956-7 and then steadily declining to 28.4 per cent in the first half of 1959-60. The report also noticed that the village folk resented the condition of minimum people's contribution to match government grants on the ground that 'they are being discriminated against in relation to urban people for whom government does so much without asking for any matching contribution from them.'[27] Government grants constitute more than half of the total income of most panchayats, and in the case of some of them almost 90 per cent. Panchayats, therefore, do not have any appreciable incentive to raise their own funds. They cannot also undertake activities of a commercial type to augment their resources, for they do not have the necessary expertise.

Very few of the office bearers of panchayati raj institutions know about the intricacies of rural development. With a view to give them training in this the National Institute of Rural Development was set up in 1958 at Mussorie and later shifted to Hyderabad in 1964. It became an autonomous body in 1965. Apart from imparting training the institute carries out research studies. Its services are available to private and public sector undertakings also. It is the main advisory body for the Centre for Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) which has its headquarters at Comilla and Bangladesh.[28]

It would be wrong to say that rural reconstruction and panchayati raj have had no impact on prosperity in the villages. Jayaprakash Narayan's dismal picture of rural India is too harsh. 'What meets the eye' he says 'are utter poverty, misery, inequality, exploitation, backwardness, stagnation, frustration

27 Ibid, p. 126, *op. cit.*, (The Community Development Programme in India—A Summary Review, *Reserve Bank of India Bulletin*, vol. 15, no. 1, January 1961.

28 *India 1980*, Publications Division, Goverment of India, pp. 257-8

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and loss of hope'.[29] Dr Ambedkar's diatribe is even more ill-conceived. 'I hold that these village republics have been the ruination of India' he said. 'What is the village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and communalism?'

Indian villages are by and large much better of than what they were three decades ago. A large number are connected with good roads, are electrified and have pucca houses. Many people living in villages have improved their standard of living, own transistors, cycles, scooters and a few have cars. The green revolution has modernised agriculture, and village co-operatives as well as the large number of special schemes have to some extent freed peasants from the clutches of the money-lender. At the end of June 1978 there were 1.16 lakh primary agricultural credit societies convering 96.3 per cent of the rural areas with a share capital of Rs 420.69 crore. A number of seed corporations like the National Seeds Corporation (NSE) State Farms Corporation (SFCI) have been set up for supplying farmers quality seeds. The fertiliser consumption has increased enormously. In 1979-80 it was 52.56 lakh tonnes and is expected to be about 54 lakh tonnes in 1980-81.

Land reforms have aimed at the abolition of intermediary tenures, as a consequence of which over two crore farmers have been brought into direct relationship with the state. Cultivating tenants have been given protection against rackrenting and eviction, and their ownership over the land cultivated by them assured. Homestead tenants have also been granted protection. Consolidation of holdings proceedings have been taken in respect of almost 4.5 crore hectares of argricultural land.

Despite all these myriad salutary measures, why can't India produce enough food for her inhabitants and why does the average Indian cultivator remain poor? There are many reasons for this, and perhaps the two foremost ones are the swelling population and the ever shrinking landholdings. According to the 1971 census the rural population was slightly

29 *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, 20 November 1970. Quoted by Dilip Hiro, *Inside India Today*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976, p. 3.

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more than 80 per cent of the total, and in the evil impact of the population explosion the Indian villages have obviously the lion's share. The result is that despite the improvement in facilities it seems the villages have only marked time through the years. New roads have been made, new schools and dispensaries opened, but the beneficiaries have multiplied hundredfold, much beyond the number they could cater for. Electrification had spread to more villages but often the peasants are so poor that they cannot afford to pay for electricity. Population rise makes rural India's progress seem like Penelope's web—appearing and then disappearing. For example though the literacy rate went up from 18 per cent in 1947 to 30 per cent in 1971, the position regrading literacy deteriorated because of population rise. In 1951 there were 298 million illiterates. Twenty years later there were 386 million. Most of India's farmers have uneconomic holdings. In the five year period from 1970-1 to 19/6-7 the number of operational holdings increased from 71 million to 81.5 million, while the area operated went up only by one million hectares (162 million to 163 million). On the other hand the number of large holdings (10 hectares and above) decreased by 12.5 per cent only, when the area operated went down by 15.5 per cent. A study conducted by the Reserve Bank of India in Bihar showed that about 64 per cent of the operational holdings are marginal, or less than one hectare in size. Another 15 per cent are between 1-2 hectares. Thus small and marginal holdings account for 79 per cent of the total operational land of 120 hectares.[30] In fact about two-thirds of all rural holdings have less than 5 acres of land.[31]

Thus the majority of farmers in India are small ones. Since tractors require at least an area of four hectares of land for economic operation, they do not have a tractor or own a tubewell. Either they have to do without them and carry on the old traditional farming by ploughs and be at the mercy of the monsoon (for large areas are still uncovered by canals), or

30 A.K. Nanda, *Agriculture at Crossroads, The Pioneer*, 26 November 1981.

31 Dilip Hiro, *Inside India Today*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976, p. 98.

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involve themselves in government loans. Thus for them one money-lender has only been replaced by another. The new one may be more liberal, but is uncompromisingly Shylockian in the matter of repayment. Consolidation of holdings is only a temporary expedient, for after it has been done, inheritance and partition begin again the process of dismemberment. The ceiling laws were a step towards socialisation which has been the objective of every five-year plan, and an attempt to counter-act militant communism. Although many landowners found devices to thwart the ceiling laws, government did manage to get a very small proportion of surplus land (only 0.01 million hectares out of the total cropped area of 1.67 million hectares). Having got it, the principle of distribution was the benefit of the largest number. It pleased the politicians, but it was little use for the landless persons whom they tried to benefit, for they could hardly do much with a holding of two or three acres. Most of them sold it off and relapsed to the landless state. Many of the landowners began to cultivate their own land, throwing the labourers who used to do the job out of employment. Between 1961 and 1971 the number of landless labourers rose by 81 per cent (from 17.3 million to 31.3 million).[32] The final agrarian pattern resulting from tenancy reforms, small holdings and the rehabilitation of the landless, was tiny patches of cultivation on the one hand which could barely suffice for the cultivator's domestic needs, and on the other sprawling farms of those who, having influence or guile, had managed to dodge the ceiling laws. This was a far cry from the 'socialistic pattern of society,' which in 1954 the Indian parliament had declared to be India's goal. (The same structure of sumptuous richness and abject poverty dominates the Indian urban scene also). Incidentally small holdings (which predominate), are the main cause of low agricultural yields.

'The basic structure of panchayati raj is sound, 'says a writer who has made a detailed study of it.[33] It has provided a good

32 *Statistical Outline of India* 1972-3, p. 24. Quoted in Dilip Hiro *Inside India Today*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976, p. 101.

33 Henry Maddick, *Panchayati Raj*, Longman, 1970, p. 307.

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training ground for local leadership. Another view is not so charitable:

'One ancient instrument for expressing that experience of voiceless people was the panchayat, a sort of free-for-all get-together of the village men to air their quarrels and grievances without leaders, rules, agenda, or designated time or meeting place. The institution had long been subverted by the village landlord and money-lender, who had taken it over and run it—much as the country was taken over and run by Mrs Gandhi's government during the Emergency. Moreover, in thirty years of modern middle-class rule in independent India the government, though it often gave lip service to the ideals of the panchayat, in actuality neglected to revive the panchayat in its true, lusty form'.[34]

The procedure of panchayat meetings and even the constructive work done by them can be called in question. But it would not be correct to accuse them of dictatorial methods or to censure the government for merely giving 'lip service to the ideals of the panchayat'. Many of the sarpanches may be overbearing, but few can ignore the opinion of the village people as a whole. The system provides a vital link in the democratic process. As a report of the Institute of Local Government Studies at the University of Birmingham observes:

'Panchayati raj provides an organisation for co-ordinating different services; it has through its selected representatives, direct links with the people through which both participation and leadership can be encouraged and fostered; its objectives are open ended as regards the overall development of the whole community'.[35]

As regards government support, in a country with poor resources, the expectation cannot be high. But to say that the government neglected to revive the panchayats would not be justified. 'Most states have given the panchayat a percentage share of land revenue and a local cess on it at specific rates, in order to increase their resources. Kerala has given to its panchayats the entire land revenue as a basic grant, and

34 Ved Mehta, *The New India*, Penguin Books, 1971, p. 145.
35 Henry M eddic, *Panchayati Raj*, Longman, 1970, p. 313.

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Gujarat has assigned the entire proceeds of its revenue to panchayati raj bodies. In Bihar even the work of land revenue collection has been entrusted to the panchayats which receive 5-10 per cent of the total collection as commission'.[36a] Some states, like Andhra Pradesh, have given incentives and cash prizes for good panchayats, others like Madras share specific tax revenues with them. Equalisation and matching grants are provided to assist panchayat.

It is true that much remains to be done and there are many failings. The panchayats have developed from above downwards as a part of the community development programme, and that takes away from the process of their democratisation. They have been exploited by politicians and have become instruments of propaganda in their hands. The office bearers of rural local bodies are more inclined to seek the patronage of the bosses of various government departments in the district and of the ministers, than the goodwill of their own village people by selfless service. They have to be spoon-fed, and have done very little to be self-reliant. As in urban municipalities, corruption is often rampant, particularly in the higher reaches like that of the zila parishads. It was so bad that recently the government of Uttar Pradesh had to stop the practice of buying *tat patties* (jute mats) for school children of zila parishad schools to sit on, because the transactions involved a lot of bribe money. The finances of most panchayats are in a deplorable state, and they are unable to usefully utilise whatever resources they have. Nevertheless panchayat raj institutions have come to play an important part in making inhabitants of rural India conscious of their rights and responsibilities. They have trained persons who would otherwise have remained unknown and inconspicuous, to become prominent leaders. As Maddick observes, 'Panchayati raj is playing and will play a very important part in the whole complicated and lengthy process of social and economic advance....To an outsider the growth of this system in all its aspects within the short period of six to seven years is quite remarkable.[36b] With all its

36(a) Henry Maddick, *Panchayati Raj*, Longman, 1970, p. 127.
36(b) *Ibid*, p. 318 and 319.

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defects and pitfalls Indian local self-government institutions are a big stride towards the democratic process and an essential element of Indian independence. In the words of Kwame Nkrumah: 'We prefer self-government with danger to servitude with tranquility.'[37]

(4) Some Vexing Problems

(*a*) *Corruption*

Some historians of contemporary India speak about corruption as though it was an entirely Indian characteristic.[48] Corruption, however, in some form or the other, is a world-wide disease. Only the extent and the methods vary. In foreign countries, for example, if one were to give an extra bob or dollar for some service rendered, it would be called a tip. In India they would give it a long name, viz. 'illegal gratification.' When British rule began in India with the East India Company, the Company's servants, even some of the governors general, like Clive and Warren Hastings, were corrupt. Most of them indulged in private trading, even after being cautioned not to do so. What the Mughal emperors took as *nazar* the English rulers took as bribes with less justification. *Nazar* was perhaps excusable as something customary, but the same thing as bribe money was not. As a contrast, after independence, Venkataraman, a member of the Indian Civil Service, was sentenced to three years's imprisonment for certain irregularities even when the evidence brought against him was weak. When he appealed to the Supreme Court his sentence was increased from three years to seven. On the contrary the Company's servants were shown indulgence both in India and in their home country when they were proved to be corrupt. Sometime back when there was power failure in a foreign city for just a few minutes, shops were ransacked and looted in the darkness. In India power failures are frequent, and yet no one thinks of removing

37 Inscribed on his statue at Accra.

38 Dilip Hero, *Inside India Today*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976, pp. 32-42.

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anything from the shops. Customers patiently stand by till candles are lit and in the dim light, shopping proceeds as though nothing had happened.

This is all the more creditable seeing that India is one of the poor countries of the world. Richness and poverty do not, of course, in the final analysis, rule corruption. A poor man may be strictly honest, and a monied man corrupt. But the temptation of a man who can't meet his essential needs, to make an extra buck or two, is strong. Due to many factors, not the least being high taxation, India's civil servants's net salary after deductions, is surprisingly low. Says Suman Dubey in *India Today*, 'Today's joint secretary earns Rs 3,050, but inflation, higher taxes and the notorious Compulsory Deposit (CDS) have slashed his effective take-home pay down to a meagre Rs 800 to Rs 1,000 a month at the 60s prices (£ 47.4 to £ 59.5 or $88.9 to £111.1 approx).[39] Seeing that the civil servant is the highest paid in India, the plight of other government servants can be imagined. More than poverty, the reason can be found in the decline in morals. The *Ramacharitamanasa* says : 'As rivers pour into the sea, although the sea has no desire for them, even so wealth and happiness go uncalled, to the virtuous man'.[40] Modern materialism with its race for wealth and its unscruplous methods for attaining it, have led to the spread of corruption in recent times to almost all branches of administration. In the past, higher officers, and departments like the judiciary, were free from corruption, but now the line cannot be drawn anywhere. Corruption has spread among ministers, and the top officers of almost all departments. The *Gita* says: 'For whatsoever a great man does, that very thing other men do also. They follow the standard he sets up'.[41] Thus corruption has seeped into the entire fabric of Indian society. A job cannot be got without money or influence just as a bridegroom cannot be obtained without a dowry ! Even for moving a file, for getting a payment rightfully due for work done, for reservation on a train, or just for getting together people to listen to a politician's pompous speech, one

39 *India Today* (ed) Aroon Purie, June 1-15, 1980, p. 32.
40 Tulsidasa, *Ramacharitamanasa, Balkanda, 293:1*
41 *Bhagavad Gita* III:21.

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pays a bribe. Almost all statesmen have grappled with the problem of corruption—Jawaharlal Nehru, Shastri, Gulzarilal Nanda (who announced a time limit for ending it), and in our own days Mrs Gandhi. But all, alas! without success. In truth it is difficult to detect and eradicate corruption. Commenting on this Kautilya said more than 2,500 years ago 'Just as the fish moving about in water cannot be detected either drinking or not drinking water so the government servants can't be detected while taking money for themselves'. The Soviet Union has not been able to end corruption 'even after fifty years of planned economy'[42] Corruption exists in some form or the other in USA and most European countries. In Asian countries in some instances it is worse than in India. Taya Zinkin, who can claim objectivity along with a knowledge of India, is hopeful of the situation improving, though she admits corruption has increased :

'However, taking a long term view, my guess would be that corruption will go down . The younger generation is far more honest than their parents....There is a great deal of basic honesty in the people, and when the younger generation gets into its own it will find a great deal of support from the masses who are very quick at finding, respecting and supporting a "good man"[43] and by "good man" the Indian masses mean an honest man'.

Mrs Zinkin is right about the Indian masses, but one can't say the same about the 'younger generation,' which in the fifteen years following her observation is well on its way to become the older generation. During these years corruption has increased, not abated. What is worse, its evil fumes have ascended to areas untouched before. Corruption has become more deep-rooted and endemic, and so its cure has become even more difficult. A recent report in an English daily says that following the Antulay episode (involving collection of money to the extent of Rs 30 crore through seven trusts by Abdul Rehman Antulay, Maharashtra chief minister), details of many similar trusts and funds by central and state leaders are slowly coming to light.

42 Giselher Wirsing, *The Indian Experiment*, Orient Longman, 1972, p. 97.

43 *Taya Zinkin, Challenges in India*, Chatto & Windus, 1966, p. 86.

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One such trust in Madhya Pradesh collected more then Rs 3 crore. 'Corruption in the bureaucratic level' says the report 'is going up considerably....Officials who were reluctant to be parties to the corruption were being penalised...In the railway, post and telegraphs and other public sector undertakings, corruption has become endemic. According to information the railway running staff has duplicate vouchers. In posts and telegraphs also the staff has methods to collect money by inflating bills. The vigilance officers cannot do anything about it.'[44] So great a jump has corruption taken that people have come to hail it familarly as BBC (bribery, black marketing and corruption) !

The tendency of politicians high up is to cling to their offices come what may, and for the government servants to look upon their salaries as pocket-money and illegal gains as their income. Gone are the days of integrity when Shastri, who was railway minister then, resigned in 1956 after a derailment in which 144 people died; and of Kewal Mathrani, finance secretary, who aware that the budget had imposed an extra Rs 50 as tax on tyres, waited till the tax was actually imposed before he bought the much needed tyres for his own private car.[45] Even persons of the standing of ministers and chief ministers, when faced by scandals which pull their name into the mire, will not step down. As Mrs Zinkin puts it 'In India resignations, are never voluntary. People enjoy being cremated in office'[46a]

A lot appears to have been done by the government to stamp out corruption, but it is mostly ineffective and mere window dressing. Anti-corruption organisations like the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and the Vigilance Commission and Directorate occasionally prepare reports about the public servants who have been caught actually taking bribes or who have been punished for corruption. Seldom does one come across any high ranking officer figuring in these reports. The main thrust is against petty officials, peons, qanungoes and so forth—those who are

44 *The Pioneer*, 11 October 1981.
45 Taya Zinkin, *Challenges in India*,, Chatto, & Windus 1966, p. 51.
46a *Ibid*, p. 25.

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ranked in class three or four categories.[46b] Besides prosecution and punishment are rare, most of the inquiries ending in acquittal. In the report of the Andhra Pradesh Vigilance Commission for the year 1975-6 for example, out of 214 reports received, departmental action was advised in 41 and regular inquiries in 75 cases. Out of these the charges could not be substantiated in 86 cases (12 being under inquiry).[47] In the West Bengal report for 1975 the figures were as follows :[48]

No.of persons involved in inquiries and cases	*No.of persons convicted in cases in courts*	*No.acquitted or discharged by courts*	*Number punished in departmental proceedings*	*No.exonerated in departmental proceedings*
1,816*	3	18	73	74

*(Note : Remaining cases were pending)

So too is the case in respect of income tax raids. There are raids by the legion, but few prosecutions. Against 14,023 searches to unearth undeclared wealth only 948 prosecutions were launched. Of these only 105 resulted in conviction since 1975-6. In 1980-1 there were 679 searches in the first four months, but only two cases were prosecuted. Convictions were even fewer.[49]

Although it is next to impossible to eradicate corruption altogether, a deeper probe into its causes and cures is needed. The main causes appear to be (1) Delays in disposal, particularly in departments in which such delays result in financial loss

46b Indian government servants are divided into four categories. Senior officers belong to class one, junior ones to class two. Clerks are in class three, and class four consists of peons, drivers and equivalent inferior government servants.

47 Eleventh Report of the Andhra Pradesh Vigilance Commission for the period from 1 April 1975 to 31 March 1976, p. 24-5 (Table Appendix V),

48 Government of West Bengal, Vigilance Commission Report for 1975, pp. 6-7.

49 Figures From *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, September 1-15, 1981, p. 11v.

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and inconvenience to many people. For example the departments of industries, food and civil supplies, transport, and those dealing with the issue of licences and permits. Delays give the opportunity of bargaining. The beneficiary is so harassed as to pay up the bribe in desperation and have his work done. (2) A plethora of baffling and often conflicting rules and regulations. These provide a good opportunity for hampering work. If the clerk in a government office does not get his cut he quotes the rule according to which the work can not be done. One can hang a man by one set of rules and reprieve him by another. (3) Poor salaries. With the prices skyrocketing an honest person finds it difficult to live decently. He is strongly tempted to supplement his pay-packet by bribemoney. The temptation is readily provided by business houses and others wanting to get their work done. They dread the honest man who is ready to toss in the regulations, and welcome one whom they can slip an envelope under the table and let the rules lie within the covers of the book. (4) The disincentive to honesty. An honest man gets no encouragement. He sees corrupt people around him prospering, while he hardly gets any return for his honesty; not even appreciation. (5) Involved procedures. Those who want to get their work done quickly find it impossible to do so. Hence they take shortcuts, and this is accomplished by bribery.

Something can be done, therefore by preventing delays in government offices, by simplying rules and procedure, encouraging honesty and making salaries of government servants resonable and rational. Even after all this corruption will, of course, remain. It is like the indelible ink mark the electoral officer puts on the Indian voter's finger. You can make it fade a little, but the stain stays.

(b) *Black Money*

Though one does not exactly know how much black money there is in India, it is estimated to be anything from Rs 7,000

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crore to Rs 30,000 crore.[50] The origin of black money goes back to the second world war in which people became rich quickly and dodged taxation. They maintained two sets of books one for the auditor and the income tax man, and the other for their own private record. This practice continues ever since. There are many ways of making black money. One is by undervaluing transactions by showing only part of the money obtained in the official records and pocketing the rest in cash, Then there is the unaccounted money received in bribes. Black money is usually converted into gold, and that leads to gold smuggling. Each year more than 250 tons of gold (about one-fifth of the world production) is smuggled into India.[51] Quite a bit of black money in the form of Rs 100 bank-notes lies in safes and coffers in households and in bank lockers (the Rs 1,000 note was demonetised sometime ago and many just tore their notes up rather than risk exchanging them). And when it is in tremendous figures it is quietly stored up in foreign banks which are beyond the reach of Indian investigating authorities.

Government's effort to unearth black money has continued through the years. It began with intensive income tax raids, particularly on big business houses. These succeeded in creating a scare in the beginning, but soon it become more or less a routine. Most of the cases were compromised. For a number of reasons the objective was not achieved. Thereafter selective demonetisation was tried in 1946 and 1978. Resisting demonetisation of the hundred rupee bank-note on the ground that it would cause hardship (an indirect recognition that a number of them were stored away) the thousand rupee note was declared as no longer being legal tender. This was pure eyewash for there weren't many such notes in circulation. In 1976 a scheme for voluntary declaration of black money was tried, eliciting declarations in excess of Rs 1,500 crore. Failing in all these measures the government evolved the scheme of bearer bonds. It was declared that between 2 February and 30 April, 1981 anyone could buy special bearer bonds, each of

50 *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 1-15 February 1981. p. 99.
51 Dilip Hiro, *Inside India Today*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, p. 33.

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the value of Rs 14,000 redeemable in 1991 for Rs 10,000 and there would be no questions asked about the source of the investments. The scheme covered payments in foreign exchange also. Right from the beginning the bearer bonds ran into difficulties because the expedient was challenged in the court as being a kind of license to convert black money to white. The Impalas and Mercedes rolling in at the banks in Delhi thinned down. The scheme did not turn out to be attractive enough as the ordinance did not give immunity to the original buyer, or relief in any pending income tax proceeding; and at the same time locked up the investment for ten years. It netted only a small fraction of the black money. The objection filed in the court having been dismissed, the government are thinking of launching the scheme afresh, but from the response it initially received there does not seem to be much chance of its succeeding.

To root out black money one needs to go into the question why it is generated at all. The primary object is, of course, to evade taxation. The tax, detection machinery, whether it is the income tax, or sales tax or local taxes, is too ill-equipped to spot evasions and is in some cases corrupt itself. Even if taxes were low, people would still try to dodge them. As it happens, however, they have ample reason for not declaring all their assets. The rates of income tax in the highest slab used to be 97.75 per cent. This virtually meant that almost all of a man's earnings beyond a certain sum went to the government. The tax slab was lowered to 77 per cent in the 1974-75 budget. This paradoxically resulted in a rise in government revenues by Rs 130 crore. The lesson is obvious. While some people would continue to evade taxes even when they have been rationalised, the majority of the dodgers might pay them and be freed of the impending fear and tension of possible tax raids. The policy of forcing tax dodgers to cough up their unaccountable wealth, might give a temporary advantage. But it is apt to drive black money deeper down into undiscoverable channels. The time may not be far off when millionaires may take to the old fashioned device of burying their treasures! Meanwhile black money keeps on being invested in real estate and tall building. The saner

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counsel would be to create conditions in which the tax cut on earnings is rational enough to generate white money instead of black.

As we see, one of the side effects of black money is gold smuggling. Even otherwise, enchantment with the yellow metal is strong in India. Family heirlooms contain a large proportion of gold ornaments. India's slender production is not able to meet the huge demand for gold. The Janata government brought out a scheme for auctioning the government stock of gold outside its currency reserves. This had three objectives. The first one was to check the smuggling of gold into India, the second to bring down the domestic gold price and the third to provide enough money to fill the budgetary gap. In auctions conducted between 3 May and 27 October 1978, 12.9 tonnes of gold were sold for Rs 86.5 crore to 3,010 bidders. But all three objectives remained unfulfilled. The amount of Rs 86.5 crore could tide over only 8 per cent of the budgetary deficit. The fall in prices did not come as the world prices soared from Rs 632.75 to Rs 839.44 during the auction period. There was no let-up in smuggling.

(c) *The Rich and the Poor*

A historian has observed that whatever the government in India the condition of the poor remains the same. There seems to be much truth in this, if we leave out the glorious period of ancient Indian history. Muslim monarchs, with a few exceptions like Asaf-ud-daulah, were apathetic to the poor. British rulers seemed to take a sadistic pleasure in increasing their poverty, as for example the East India Company's treatment of weavers whom they persecuted so much that some of them cut off their hands to avoid being pressed into the Company's profitless service. The government of independent India after setting out on the goal of reducing the gap between the rich and the poor, ended up by increasing it.

India is still one of the poorest countries in the world. More than half of the people in it live below subsistence level. On the other hand there are those who are fabulously rich. A prominent fortnightly magazine has the following assesment :

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'According to the latest estimates, the top 20 business houses, a majority of them family-controlled, accounted for nearly 35 per cent of the total assests of the private sector. Their combined assets spiralled from Rs 1,319 crore in 1964 to Rs 5,119 crore in 1978, an annual growth rate of a steep 20.7 per cent. Of the total assets of the top eighty business houses, family controlled business—barring the Tata Group—comprise about 55 per cent'.[52]

This enrichment of those already well off has taken place at the cost of the poor. Between 1953 and 1961, for example, 'the share of the top tenth of the population in the national income rose from 28 per cent to 37 per cent, whereas that of the bottom two-fifthsd eclined from 20 per cent to 15 per cent'.[53a] According to the figures produced by the Reserve Bank of India in 1960, households in the top tenth income bracket received 36 per cent of all pre-tax income, while households in the bottom tenth had to be content with one per cent.[53b]

Thus we have on one side people who do not have a shelter above their heads, people who lie helplessly on the pavements, who in fact pass their entire lives there. In the hot months of the Indian summers and in the bitter cold of its winters hundreds of such people die, unknown, unheeded and unwept. On the other side we have the rich, luxuriating in air-conditioned rooms, moving in costly imported cars, for whom it is daily routine to consume with their friends a bottle of Scotch (which may cost as much as Rs 300—the starting monthly salary of a stenographer). This is indeed a far cry from the 'equality of status and opportunity and fraternity' promised by the preamble to the Indian constitution.

Equality of status is something which did not exist right through the Muslim and the British rule, and which does not exist in independent India. The status tag shows as clearly as a price tag, and whether it is at a hospital, or at a social gathering or in a government office dealing with public conveniences,

52 *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 16-31 March 1981, p. 66.

53 a Cited in *Frontier*, 18 October 1969, p. 31. Quoted in Dilip Hiro, *Inside India Today*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976, p. 86.

53 b A.H. Hanson & Janet Douglas, *India's Democracy*, Vikas, 1972, p. 8.

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in fact almost anywhere in India, a man is attended to according to his power, position and money. Shri Prakasha, who was governor in many Indian states, observed about socialism, 'Socialism, so far as I can understand it, stands for an approximateequality of man, and the necessity of giving equal opportunity to everyone.[54] By these standands one can't say there is socialism in India, for there is neither equality nor equal opportunity.

Garibi hatao (remove poverty) has remained a political slogan. The per capita income (at 1970-71 prices) has increased from Rs 632.8 in the years between 1970 and 1980 to a mere Rs 677.8 (just by Rs 45).[55] According to 1974 figures the per capita income of India was the lowest among many nations, some as small as Sri Lanka. It was Rs 589 for India, as against Rs 14,933 for Australia, Rs 28,805 in the US, Rs 9,405 in Italy, Rs 1,215 in Egypt, and Rs 1,028 in Sri Lanka.[56] The per capita daily calorie intake was 2374 in rural areas in 1977-8 as against the minimum requirement of 2400 as calculated by a task force of the Planning Commission.[57] Poverty cannot be removed by any redistribution of wealth for the simple reason that even if this could by some miracle be accomplished, such redistribution among India's 684 million people (1981 census), would make everyone poor. The question of poverty is linked up with population growth and unemployment. Unless India's population gets less, and industry can provide more jobs, poverty must remain. The important thing for India is not socialisation, but removal of poverty and the attainment of a minimum standard of living. The gulf between the poor and the rich is more agonising than that between the rich and the richer. The essential steps which need to be taken for combating poverty seem is be (1) Opening up new avenues of employment by greater industrial progress and by developing small scale industries. As Malthus said long ago 'All the peculiar disadvantages of a purely

54 *India Since 1947* (ed.) A. Chakrabarti, Allied Publishers. 1967 p. 119.
55 *India 1981* Publications Division, Government of India p. 159.
56 P. Tharyan, *India, the Critical Decade After Nehru*, Sterling, 1974, p. 202.
57 *Northern India Patrika*, 19 September 1981.

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agricultural country are avoided by the growth and prosperity of manufactures and commerce'[58] (2) Abandonment of government's shyness in taking up the family planning programme and executing it in right earnest. If China, India's neighbour, can achieve the small family norm, there is no reason why India can't. Someone has to make a move quick, and unfortunately in India it is only the state which can. (3) The overhauling of the administrative system, so that the man *without* power, position or money, can get at least a reasonable chance of redress; so that when the big shot affected with a cough and a paisaless man who is near death enter the hospital at the same moment the doctors are able to attend to the poor man first. This, of course, must come from within. It means the scruplous observance of the queue etiquette and of giving priority to need rather than status. If public men in high offices fret and fume when others more needy than them are given preference, and when rules which ought to be observed are applied to them also, we can have a feudalistic society but not a socialistic one. (4) Making education work oriented rather than academic. This should be done at the initial stages, so that we do not have a host of high school-passed, undergraduates, and graduates, knocking about for non-existent jobs. (5) Fixing minimum salaries at subsistence levels according to present day cost of living and prices. (6) Reducing the pressure on agricultural land and increasing the size of minimum holding to make them productive. In the effort to please larger numbers, government encourages smaller holding. This remains a barren endeavour for the landless can hardly do much to develop their small bits of land. It neither pleases the people nor benefits the land. A holding of less than ten acres is not likely to be productive. Although a law of primogeniture may be unpopular, failing all else, that may remain the final solution for easing pressure on cultivable land.

Politicians and statesmen have too long been exploiting poverty as a slogan. It is time that they really did something about it, as they have done to shake off foreign rule. In the words of Bernard Shaw, 'Poverty and slavery have stood up for

58 T.R. Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, Dent, Vol. 2, p. 88.

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centuries to your sermons and leading articles; they will not stand up to my machine-guns. Don't preach at them! Don't reason with them. Kill them.'[59]

(d) *Wastage and the Spending Mania*

India is like a poor man who buys a grand cake to feed his starving children and leaves it outside for the birds to peck on; and when it is reduced to a morsel, gives a tiny slice to each of them. On the one hand we have spending sprees, on the other colossal wastage. The spending is on such a wild scale that one would think we had money to burn. There are highly paid foreign voyages for elite politicians and bureaucrats with less of business and more of pleasure. Sometimes there is no business at all. Sample this :

'A foreign tour—ostensibly to study the pattern of post-graduate institutes, which do not exist anywhere abroad, was conveniently converted into a luxurious pleasure trip by some senior officials and non-officials of the state (Uttar Pradesh) recently. A four-member delegation...left for Washington DC to "study the pattern of P-GIs there". Another two-member delegation...also left for Washington (four days later)....Each of the six members was given £5,000 (Rs 1 lakh) in foreign exhange, exclusive of fare, for personal expenditure....The Director of the National Health Institute at Washington gave (just) three minutes to the visiting delegation on the second day. The team had no prior appointment with him. From Washington the team members dispersed to different destinations—London, Paris, Italy and Sweden. Interestingly enough none of these places have a P-GI similar to our requirements....

'The entire exercise becomes more intriguing when one learns that this foreign trip was preceded by a trip around four post-graduate institutes (earlier). A sum of Rs 35,000 was spent on the trip about which no report has been submitted so far'.

The reporter comments with justifiable indignation: 'When the country in reeling under mounting inflation, the tax-payer

59 George Bernard Shaw, Preface, *Major Barbara*, 1907.

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has reason to express deep concern over frittering away of scarce foreign exchange on meaningless trips to foreign lands'.[60]

.Examples can be multiplied. Ministers and high-ups in Delhi keep making fruitless and costly trips burning up the already diminishing foreign exchange.

The wastages are worse. Says a report from the capital:

'A conservative estimate is that over ten million tons of food-grains are either eaten away by rats or other pests, or lost in transportation, or pilfered from the godowns....The birds too take away a sizable quantity from the fields. Another phenomenal wastage takes place in the utilisation of water resources. According to the government's estimate 15 to 20 per cent of the water could be saved by constructing pukka canals. Due to misuse of water facilities irrigation work suffers....In northern India particularly, the wastage of water is taking place due to lack of conservation methods.

'The national productivity council has revealed reckless waste of energy in homes, industry and agricultural sectors. Diesel is being wasted due to the low efficiency of pumping sets. In the Punjab alone, the wasteful consumption of diesel oil was 100 million litres per year. In Gujarat, light diesel oil is wasted to the tune of Rs 150 million because of defective irrigation pumping sets'.[61]

All this oil is being wasted when India has to spend heavily on its oil import. In another case brought to light Rs 3 lakh worth of bleaching powder purchased by the Uttar Pradesh Medical and Health Directorate for combating epidemics following floods and drought, was rendered unfit for use because the drums containing it were left in the open.[62]

Strict control over wasteful expenditure is essential for a poor country like India. The following steps might help. (1) A high powered economy committee to look into the departments of heavy spending. The committee should make a quick review of these and suggest ways of reducing expenditure and eliminating wastage. The recommendations of the committee

60 *The Pioneer*, 15 November 1981.
61 *The Pioneer*, 11 November 1981.
62 *The Pioneer*, 14 November 1981.

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should normally be accepted and acted upon. (2) A stop to all non-productive expenditure like increase in government departments and staff, except in very special circumstances. (3) A halt to all foreign trips apart from those for seeking technical know-how (exceptions being heads of states). Conditions in India and other developing countries are quite different from the progressive ones, and it is not possible to apply their standards here. Often government servants who go out to get a particular training are put on to an entirely different work on coming back to India. Such courses are sheer waste of public money. (4) Creation of proper and adequate storage for material which needs to be used later e.g. grain godowns, cold storages, warehouses, silos and so forth. (5) Getting rid of all wasteful expenditure which is for show, and a relic of old feudalism, as for example armed guards at the residences of VIPs, ministers, officers and the like, guards of honour etc. An elected representative who goes round villages and addresses public gatherings has hardly any need for such close security when he is within the walls of his home. Obviously these guards are more a status symbol than a security measure. Apart from the expenditure such measures involve and the wastage of manpower, they are marks of an imperialistic rule which is no more, and ought to have disappeared with it.

(e) *The Population Explosion*

Something has already been said about this major problem, on the tackling of which India's prosperity mainly rests.[63] According to the 1981 census India's population has reached the colossal figure of almost 684 million. There has been a 24.75 per cent growth in the last decade compared to 24.80 per cent in the 1961-71 period. The population has doubled in the 34 years of independence, and by A.D. 2000 it might according to the registrar general of census operations, reach

63 See The Five-Year Plans, Causes of Failure, *ante*, and Chapter 12, Outlook for the Future, People, People, Everywhere. The problem is of vital significance for India, and the reader's indulgence is solicited if there is a little repetition.

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the staggering figure of 1,368 million. Population rise makes economic progress for India as distant as the waters of Tantalus. A vigorous family planning programme is a vital need.

In evolving a programme for population control it is also essential to see that it involves all communities, so that it does not upset the demographical balance. During the years 1961-71 for example, though there was a rise in the population from 439 million to 548 million, the percentage population of Hindus decreased from 83.50 to 82.70 and that of Muslims increased from 10.70 to 11.20. The government claim has been that both communities have been equally adopting population control measures; but the actual figures belie the claim. A universal scheme of incentives and disincentives and proportionate punitive taxation seems to be the only way to ensure that all sections and communities equally adopt family planning. Adequate publicity is also an important factor. Past experience seems to indicate that while force is to be scruplously avoided, a little compulsive persuasion would not be out of place. As regards targets, it would certainly not be advisable to fix one and then to insist that it must be achieved at all costs. A target properly speaking is only a kind of estimation of what one is likely to achieve under any given circumstances. It makes it easier to assess one's own accomplishment.

(f) *Law and Order*

Conclusions about the state of law and order are difficult to arrive at because of the great divergence between the claims of the authorities responsible for its preservation and the actual state of affairs. In the early years after independence a number of reports were not recorded by police authorities. The practice has not entirely been eliminated, though it has come down a bit. Of those which are recorded, a large number, particularly thefts and burglaries, cannot be worked out, and of those which can, there is no saying that the right person has been nabbed. A government of India survey of crime made in 1964 recorded a total number of 7,59,013 cognizable crimes under the Indian Penal Code. Between the years 1955 and 1964

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there was a steady increase in crime except for the years 1957, 1960 and 1963 as the following figures will show:[64]

Year	*Total cognizable crimes*
1955	5,35,236
1956	5,85,217
1957	5,81,371
1958	5,90,987
1959	6,20,326
1960	6,06,367
1961	6,25,651
1962	6,74,466
1963	6,58,830
1964	7,59,013

The increasing trend of crime has remained through the years, and crime is steadily mounting. *India Today* recently published the findings of an opinion poll conducted by the Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB) in Delhi and 15 state capitals for the period June-September 1981 on a number of issues, one of which was law and order. The finding was that those who felt that the law and order situation had worsened were twice as numerous as those who thought that the situation had improved.[65] A report on the law and order situation in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, two of the most populous states in India, says there is 'at least one killing every three hours'.[66] According to the crime figures however, there was improvement between the years 1980 and 1979, the total number of crimes in these states being as follows:

	1979	*1980*
Uttar Pradesh	51,147	49,124
Bihar	27,032	26,131

64 Venugopal Rao, IPS., *Facets of Crime*, Allied Publishers, 1967, pp. 7-8.

65 *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 15 October 1981, p. 19.

66 *Ibid*, 1-15 June, 1980 p. 21.

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Recently the bloodiest massacre ever took place in Uttar Pradesh on 18 November 1981 in which 24 persons including seven woman were mercilessly gunned down in Deoli village in Mainpuri district in broad daylight. This was soon on the wake of the Behami massacre in Kanpur district in which 21 persons were shot dead. Following the Deoli massacre another 10 Harijans were killed in a carnage in Sarhupur village in Mainpuri district on 30 December 1981. Among heinous crimes, rape has shown particular increase. 'Three women are said to be raped almost daily in Uttar Pradesh', says a report, 'and in most cases it is the policemen who are responsible'. A recent circular sent by the IGP of Madhya Pradesh, asks policemen to desist from raping during the assembly election! This notwithstanding, a former chief minister of Madhya Pradesh has been quoted by *The Statesman* of 17 April 1980 as having remarked that "rape is only a natural human instinct" '.[67]

Train robberies have become so frequent that a call attention motion was tabled in the Indian parliament about it. The railway minister Kedar Pandey said that 'trains running within the jurisdiction of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra were mostly affected by robberies and crimes'.

Causing particular concern because of its effect on Indian economy is the unprecedented increase in smuggling. In 1978 all-India contraband seizures were valued at Rs 30.94 crore. By 1979, the figure had registered a 35 per cent rise standing at Rs 40,42 crore. In 1980 it was Rs 52.84 crore, and in 1981 (till September) Rs 37.38 crore. In the British rule Indian opium found its way to China so much so that it had become a problem for the Chinese people. Now quite a bit of opium is coming to India clandestinely from Pakistan. In 1979 seizures were only 8 kg. In 1980 they rose to 315 kg. CBI director Jagjit Singh Bawa is reported to have said 'Opium is smuggled from Pakistan in substantial quantities.'

That the guardians of the law should themselves be law

67 *The Pioneer*, 25 November 1981,
68 *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 30 November 1981, p. 56.
69 *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 1-15 May 1981, p. 55.

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breakers, is indeed sad. Most of the cars parked wrongly, and that with impunity, are government cars. Policemen, who should set an example to others, infringe traffic signals. Worse still, they are sometimes actually in league with criminals. The many innocent people who are reportedly killed in fake encounters by the police is still more serious. It is true that the dacoit menace is strong. If it is was only dacoits who were eliminated, one could condone this unconventional departure from the law. But apparently one can't be too sure of that. 'Out of 983 "dacoits", killied in 1980 [in Uttar Pradesh]' says a report, 'at least 200 are people unfamiliar to the police'.[70] Naturally these killings did not make much of an impact, as the report illustrates by figures: 'Even in purely statistical terms, the widespread slaughter is paradoxical. Between 1972 and 1980, the number of dacoits killed increased by over 1,000 per cent but the number of actual dacoities came down by just seven—from 3,650 in 1972 to 3,643 in 1980. Similarly, murders in the state have increased marginally from 5,202 in 1978 to 5,422 in 1980.[71]

The involvement of politicians in crime, is another regrettable feature. A number of them have been suspected of complicity with dacoit gangs, so much so that the Uttar Pradesh government had to pass a stringent law to be able to punish those of them who harboured dacoits. *The Statesman* recently commented 'Assembly records show involvement of MLAs and ministers [in Uttar Pradesh] in crimes including murder'.[72] Apart from these more serious crimes, one finds politicians transgressing or disregarding the law in small matters too, as for example the forcible occupation of houses either not allotted to them or allotted to others. Once a minister occupies an official residence he seldom vacates it after he has ceased to be a minister. This is nothing but a subtle form of house grabbing and sometimes the unpleasantness involved in such incidents is really a shame. An example is a report in a Uttar Pradesh daily under the caption Police Inspector Pays a Heavy

70 *India Today*, 16-28 February 1981, p. 104.
71 *Ibid.*
72 *India Today*, 1-15 June 1989, p. 21 *op. cit.*

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Price : 'A Police Inspector has been awarded for his devotion to duty with his transfer to one of the most dreaded police stations in the state. The action was taken because he had dared to arrest a notorious youth along with a stolen scooter in utter disregard to the known fact that the youth had the blessings of a prominent cabinet minister of the state'.[73]

Recently the Uttar Pradesh home minister told a press conference that the government had complaints against certain politicians who were reported to be playing the role of harbourers and accomplices of some of the listed dacoit gangs. Another report concerns a senior police officer who was ticked off by no less a person than the state home minister for taking action against an MLA who was charged of forcibly extracting a document from the accountant of the education department.[74]

A feature which reflects on the growing insecure condition is the use of the police in almost all activities—in gatherings, in municipal checkings, in holding examinations and even in regulating the parking of cars when there is a wedding ! On the one hand this means the creation of a kind of police state in which nothing can be done without the police, and on the other the administration is believed to be based on democratic principles. The two stands are really incompatible. The function of the police in an alien rule is to sustain the government, in a free country to assist it. With indedendence the role of the police should have changed accordingly, but it hasn't. Unless the police quits misusing authority, it is hardly going to be of much practical use in a democratic set-up. The *khadi* uniform should inspire confidence not fear. [75]

It is not in India alone, however, that crime has taken a run. It is so almost the world over. In the United States of America about 1½ million major crimes were committed in 1941. In 1956 this figure had swelled to 2.8 million. In 1950 it was estimated that a crime took place every 18 seconds, in 1957 every 11.3 seconds.[76] As civilisation grows, criminals become more sophisticated in their methods, more ambitious in their

73 *The Pioneer*, 19 November 1981.
74 *The Pioneer*, 27 October 1981.
75 *The Pioneer*, 15 May 1982 (Dutiful SP Invites Politician's Wrath).
76 Venugopal Rao IPS *Facets of Crime*, Allied Publishers, 1967, p. 8.

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operations. The gifts of materialistic progress are Janus-faced. Unfortunately, in India this has not been sufficiently appreciated. The methods of detection have not kept pace with the spurt in crime. Mobility is poor. The police are able to reach the scene of the crime only hours after its commission, when most of the spot evidence has been obliterated. The scientific section works slowly and ponderously. Though there have been half-hearted traffic weeks there has been no attempt to educate the people on the more vital question of how to act on the commission of a heinous crime, as for example murder. The result is that well-wishers and people of the household themselves, often unwittingly destroy valuable clues such as fingerprints etc. The police is under-staffed and they are frittered away on unimportant work like VIP duty and the like. There is no sense of urgency and where the police should be hurrying to the scene of crime fast as a hare they move with the speed of a tortoise.

How can the law and order situation be improved ? There is no easy solution. The matter is tied up with the growth of civic sense. The less of that, the more police is required, and the greater the need of maintaining law and order. The bud of civic sense has not really sprouted in India. The reason is not entirely lack of education. Even educated people, spotlessly dressed and owning cars and scooters, ignore traffic signs when no traffic cop is there, go on the wrong side of the road, litter roads with banana skins and rubbish, dirty walls with slogans and posters, and do such anti-civic acts. The real reason is that people have not got into the habit of placing responsibilities above rights and the country above self. To bring about civic sense might take many years. What is to be done till then ?

The reorganisation of the police has been undertaken many times since independence, and one can't say it has kept pace with the times. No less than 14 commissions of inquiry expending about Rs 15 crore have been established during the years to remodel the Police system which continues to be based on the 120 years old Police Act of 1861, but very few of the recommendations have been implemented. The first requisite of a good police force is that it should be above board. If

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the traffic constable keeps on taking his cuts and tips from rickshaw-pullers, hawkers, trucks and so forth, obviously he can't do anything to regulate traffic. If the police is in league with criminals, crime can't be checked till doomsday. Secondly, the police force should not be frittered away on useless jobs like ceremonial guards to high officers, unnecessary shadows for politicians, VIP duty and the like. All this might tickle the vanity of bureaucrats and politicians, but it is sheer wastage. Besides while it is essential that the police should get power, it should not be unbridled power, lest the policeman turn into a genie released from the bottle. The police should be revamped, increased in numbers, made more mobile and provided the devices of tracking criminals which are in use in progressive countries—radio, TV, wireless, electronic gadgets quick moving vehicles etc. Thirdly, there is the problem of illegal arms. It is reported that in the first four months of 1980, nearly 6,995 such arms (including 5,596 country made pistols) were recovered in Uttar Pradesh alone. The actual number of illicit arms existing all over India must be running into lakhs, and in the hands of criminals they become a potent threat to law and order. Although 'drives' to find out such arms are undertaken and workshops manufacturing them sometimes unearthed in chance raids, what is required is a concerted and determined effort to do away with the sources of supply of such arms. Besides dacoits and criminal elements are able to obtain their supply of ammunition from licensed arms shops and other sources. If this could be checked, ammunition starved dacoits might be forced to give up their nefarious activities. Fourthly, the unholy alliance of crime and politics must cease. Enough has been said to show that criminals often receive the support of politicians. This again, is a universal problem, not confined to India, and there is no easy solution. As Spencer say: 'Nay, indeed, have we not seen that government is essentially immoral? Is it not the offspring of evil, having about it all the marks of its parentage? Does it not exist because crime exists? Is it not strong or as we say, despotic, when crime is great? Is there not more

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liberty—that is less government—as crime diminishes?'[77] In a country like India where there is over-government crime seems to have crossed all bounds. This apparently illustrates Spencer's observation. The only way to retain over-government (as indeed would be necessary till civic sense takes over), and yet to decrease crime, is to ensure that criminals do not find shelter in the caravansarai of political power. A rigorous screening of all candidates for the legislatures and some provision for their removal subsequently if evidence is found of their complicity with criminals, might act as a deterrent.

Another drawback in tackling crime in the correct manner is what one may call the 'quota system'. A report under the caption 'Overzealous Traffic Cops' is revealing. 'At times', the report says 'motor-cyclists, scooterists, three wheelers and cars are being *challaned* on flimsy grounds. It is learnt that quotas of *challans* have been fixed for cops who often go out of their way to please their high-ups.'[78] Such quotas are fixed for preventive action as for example under the Excise Act, Arms Act and the Criminal Procedure Code (particularly sections 107, 109 and 110 of it). The result often is that the cop whose quota remains unfulfilled catches hold of any tramp he can lay his hand on, and slipping a packet of opium or a country-made pistol into his pocket, nabs him to make up his quota. Such a system is entirely misconceived for it penalises not the criminal but the innocent man. Then there is the vexing delay in the trial of cases. A commission which visited Bihar found that in a number of cases the undertrial prisoners had been in jail for years together without a decision. The Inspector General of Police of Bihar is reported to have said 'Particularly in Bihar there has been a total collapse of criminal justice. Trials are pending in the courts for years together. Criminal are often bailed out and they resort to crime repeatedly.'[79] Finally, social opprobrium can be a strong aid in reforming the criminal, particularly when he sets out first on

77 Herbert Spencer, Social Statics, 1850 Chapter on 'The Right to Ignore the State'.

78 *The Pioneer*, 19 November 1981.

79 Quoted in *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 16-26 February 1981 p. 104.

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the road to crime. It acts like elixir on the expiring conscience. Few wrongdoers can stand disapproving gazes and the meaningful silences which attend them.

(g) Caste and Conversions

From one point of view it would be more appropriate to call India a sub-continent rather than a country. The variety in religions, communities, castes, languages and dialects, customs, modes of living and costumes is amazing. There are Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Jains, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, tribals and many other minor faiths. The caste system is organised into five major groups, viz. Brahmins (priests) Kshatriyas (warriors) Vaishyas (artisans and merchants), Shudras (workers and farmers) and the scheduled castes or Harijans (untouchables). There are almost 3,000 sub-castes. Racial and ethnic groups as diversified as the Caucasoid, Negroid, Australoid, Mongoloid and the Indo-Aryan are found, and complexions range from the fairest to the darkest. In 1950 there were 845 distinct languages, out of which 15 have been specified in the eighth schedule of the constitution viz. Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu.[80] Although Hindi in the Devanagari script has been declared as the official language, English is used in practice for all official purposes of the union and for transaction of business in the Indian parliament. Thus despite the richness and variety of India's language and dialects, English still reigns supreme. Recently when some Indian MP's went for a conference in China and spoke in English the Chinese were bewildered. Their bewilderment gave place to amusement when they were told of the large number of languages existing in a country which still chose to use a foreign tongue!

It wouldn't be quite right to say that 'rigid caste distinctions may have their origin in the fear complex created as a result

80 *India 1980*, Publications Division, Government of India, p. 11.

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of Muslim rule'.[81] Doubtless in the beginning there were classes (*varnas*) not castes. One of the reasons given by Arjuna to Krishna for desisting from the fratricidal war with the Kauravas was that if their entire families perished there would be chaos, which would lead to corruption of women in the family and that would erode society by the mixture of classes (*varnas*)—*jayate varnasamkarah.*[82] But while in the early Vedic age there were only Aryans and non-Aryans (Dasyus), by the time of the *Brahamanas* (the later Vedic period) caste distinctions had hardened and the *Shatapatha Brahmana* says unequivocally: 'there are four castes, Brahmins, Rajanya (Kshatriya), Vaishya and Shudra'.[83] But then caste did not isolate or divide, as it started doing later, even though the feeling of inferiority and superiority had tinged it. A Shudra, for example could not milk cows when the milk was needed for a sacrifice, and if one happened to touch a Shudra while performing a *yajna* he was disqualified from taking part in it.[84]

The Muslim rule brought with it religious persecution. Hindus were forced to embrace Islam, or else face death. Hindu women adopted the veil to preserve their honour. Caste distinctions however remained as before, except that due to the decline of priesthood, Brahmins took to other avocations. One might have expected caste distinctions to tone down in the face of a common danger. But they didn't. By the time British rule replaced the Muslim, castes had become a potent factor. The British were happy about the Indian caste system for it suited their policy of sowing discord. They magnified the differences between the higher and the lower castes, and the agitation of the untouchables to remove the unfair restrictions on them. They were not at all concerned with the miseries of the untouchables, but used them merely as an instrument to create division. The English also vigorously exploited the Hindu-Muslim differences and ultimately managed to leave

81 *India Since 1947* (ed.) A. Chakrabarti, Allied, 1967 P. 53 (L.M. Shrikant, Harijans and Tribal Communities of India)

82 *Bhagavad Gita*, I. 41.

83 *Shatapatha Brahmana*, 5:5:4:9. See author's *A History of Indian Civilisation*, Ess Ess Publications, 1979, vol. 1 pp. 82-7.

84 *Yajna* means 'a religious sacrifice' or 'oblation'.

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behind a partitioned India. Mahatma Gandhi also championed the untouchables ('Harijans', as he called them), but not as the English had done. He sincerely wanted their improvement, and in fact devoted quite a bit of his time working for it, even undergoing a fast unto death to support their cause.

Determined efforts have been made in independent India to improve the lot of the scheduled and backward castes and tribes. According to the 1971 census about 22 per cent of the country's population comprised of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. In addition some states have classified people as 'backward classes' and as 'denotified, nomadic and semi-nomadic communities.'[85] Constitutional safeguards have been provided for the protection of these 'weaker sections'. These aim at removing the social disabilities of which they have been victims, and bettering their education and economic condition. The objectives have been translated into action through : (a) legislation to combat untouchability, (b) reservation in the service and in the legislatures, (c) welfare schemes and agencies, (d) tribal development, and (e) assistance in education, health and housing.

The Indian parliament passed the Untouchability (Offences) Act in 1955. This Act was amended in 1976 to make it more comprehensive, and renamed the Protection of Civil Rights Act. Its object was to remove disabilities of untouchables regarding denial to admit them in public places like hotels, schools, temples and so forth, and to the use of conveniences like wells, tanks, roads, bathing *ghats* etc. All these, as well as the preaching and practice of untouchability, were declared punishable offences. A section of the Act even disqualified for six years any person convicted under it, from contesting for election to a state or central legislature. The legislation was doubtless a bold step, but it sought to do what could effectively be done by social reform, not by law. There have been some prosecutions under the Act, and in urban towns it has served as a deterrent to the victimisation of Harijans. But the same can't be said of the villages where casteism

85 *India 1980*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, p. 122.

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is a factor too deeply embedded to be overthrown by mere legislation. Kingsley Davis is perhaps right when he says 'As long as the village predominates, caste will be hard to eradicate, especially since it is now deeply rooted in the religion and morals of the Hindus'.[86]

Reservation for seheduled castes in services is 15 per cent of the vacancies filled by all-India open competitions and $16\frac{2}{3}$ per cent in other recruitments. For scheduled tribes there is a $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent reservation in both the categories of posts. There is similar reservation in promotions to posts of certain categories. In case representation falls below the prescribed standards, higher percentages are taken to make up the deficiency. Reservations in the two houses of the union parliament are as below :[87]

	Lok Sabha	*Vidhan Sabha*
Total number of seats	542	3,997
Seats reserved for scheduled castes	79	557
Seats reserved for scheduled tribes	40	303

Concessions such as relaxation in age limit, qualifications, experience and standards of suitability, are given to such 'weaker sections' in order to facilitate their representation.

The scheduled and backward castes are assisted by a number of government welfare schemes, and also by some voluntary non-official organisations which are kept alive by generous government grants (amounting to eighty lakh of rupees in 1978-9). Apart from help through non-plan state budgets, sizable provision has been made for these classes in the five-year plans, starting with Rs 30.04 crore in the first plan and rising to Rs 288.88 crore in the fifth plan (outlay). The plan programmes include training and coaching centres, post-matric and overseas scholarships, tribal research institutes and provision for additional hostels for students. The state sector schemes cover education, health and housing.

86 Kingsley Davis, *The Population of India and Pakistan*, p. 175.
87 Source: *India 1980*, Publications Division, p. 126, Table 9.4.

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A commission for scheduled castes and tribes was constituted by the central government in August 1978 to watch their interests. A commissioner for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes was also appointed with the same object. Three parliamentary committees were set up for their welfare in 1968, 1971 and 1973. These have now taken the form of a parliamentary standing committee. Similar committees of the various state legislatures review the welfare work at state level.

A lot has apparently been done for the upliftment of Harijans. Governments in independent India keep espousing their cause all the more, because the Harijans, which form quite a substantial proportion of the rural population, have often been a decisive force in electoral victories. But with the improvement of their condition, particularly in cities, the scheduled caste man is often no longer economically weak. Reservation and financial assistance in such cases becomes a misnomer because there are many others who, though not of the backward or scheduled castes, are infinitely more badly off. It is a moot point whether government assistance should be on the basis of economic condition or caste. On the other hand it is doubtful if Harijans have been given social equality with caste Hindus in India's sprawling villages. What is more, their oppression seems to have increased rather than diminished. 'According to official sources 'writes Prabhu Chawla 'the number of atrocities against them have gone up by over 80 per cent, from 10,735 in 1974 to over 18,000 during 1980'.[88] Even in the services while the percentage of scheduled castes is adequate in class IV posts, that in the class I and II posts is only 4.75 and 7.37 respectively.[89]

The scheduled castes have joined hands with Muslims to form the Dalit Panther-Muslim Ekta Manch. Harijan Raksha Samities (committees for the protection of Harijans) have launched a campaign to bargain with caste Hindus for concessions. Islamic countries, particularly the oil-rich Gulf ones, have exploited this cleavage and have poured in money into India to organise conversions to Islam on a large scale. An official of

88 *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 1-15 September 1981, p. 32.
89 *India 1981* Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, p. 123.

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the Islamic and Awkaf Affairs Ministry in Kuwait has been reported to have admitted this. 'Of course we spend money on spreading Islam' he said. 'What's wrong with that ? We will spread the word of the Prophet with all resources at our command'.[90] Between July 1980 and September 1981 about 5,000 Harijans embraced Islam. The main thrust has been in Tamil Nadu where over 2,000 conversions took place (against less than 1,500 between 1944 and 1980).[91] These conversions have activated orthodox Hindus into trying to wean away converted Harijans from Islam and bring them back into the fold. The task is an uphill one, for the battle is between mere persuasion and the vast monetary inducement at the instance of Islamic countries. Articles 25 (1) of the constitution provides 'all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion'. It is not easy, therefore, to bring any legislation against voluntary conversion, even though many people feel that government should intervene to stop them. In an opinion poll held in 15 key cities of India conducted by the Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB) in Delhi, it was found that 57 per cent of those consulted wanted government intervention.[92]

It is not the first time, of course, that conversions have been attempted. Muslim rulers and zealots like Mahmud Ghazni, Tamurlane and so forth did it by the sword. Various methods, including the discriminatory and taxing *jizya*, were used. Christian missionaries invented less brutal but more subtle devices. The latest Islamic drive for conversion is, therefore, nothing new. But Hinduism remains unaffected, as it has always been.

Meanwhile the effect of modernisation on the Indian caste system in general depicts a peculiar and even contradictory trend, as one writer says :

'In recent years the progress of secularisation has been loosening the caste rigidities both in form and function. The forces at work are : spread of education, political democracy,

90 *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 30 November 1981, p. 77.
91 *Ibid*, 1-15 September 1981, p. 31.
92 *India Today*, 15 October 1981, p. 19. The strongest vote in favour of intervention was in Bhopal (78%), Lucknow (72%) and Delhi (69%)

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western economic influence, urbanisation, new technology and fear of conversion to other religions. But on the other hand there are forces tending to perpetuate it. The balance between the two sets of forces is crucial.[93]

Although modernisation has brought with it inter-caste marriages and a positive desire to eschew a narrow caste outlook, caste prejudice seems to persist more than ever in the matter of bestowing favours, giving jobs and the like. What is more, a new tendency, namely caste enmity, is manifesting itself which is more dangerous than casteism. Now there are people who are not merely for their own caste, but also anti-another's. It naturally causes a lot of resentment when people are favoured or disfavoured solely on a caste basis.

In rural India caste remains an indestructible virus. Whole villages and hamlets are distinguished by the caste of their inhabitants. One is a village of Chamars, another of Brahmins or of Thakurs, and so on. Houses are grouped together caste wise. There are caste feuds and rivalries. Untouchability legislation has made little dent, and caste prejudices die hard. In the Indian villages caste reigns supreme, immune to all change. It is this inflexible casteism which determines the trend of Indian elections. This makes it all the more difficult to exterminate it. Politicians exploit casteism in the interest of votes, and the exploitation makes its influence all the more strong. It becomes a kind of vicious circle, imposssble to break.

The prospect for the extermination of casteism is yet uncertain. It might vanish with the spread of education and urbanisation. But such a deep-rooted tradition is bound to take long to go. The new challenge posed by conversions might hasten its departure. It will not be legislation which will toll the bell for it, but the growth of social consciousness and the feeling of oneness above differences; the realisation of what a

93 *Modernising Indian Economy* (ed.) M.R. Sinha, Asian Studies Press, 1967 p. 89, (D.S. Nag: Role of Social Factors in Modernising Indian Economy).

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Hindustani proverb says: 'Let none trouble about caste and creed; who calleth on God is called of God'.[94]

The Problem of Minorities

According to the 1971 census figures the percentages of population, religious community wise, and the percentage increases between 1961-1971 were as follows:[95]

Religious Community	*Percentage Increase (1961-71)*	*Percentage to Total Population (1971)*
Hindus	23.69	82.72
Muslims	30.84	11.20
Christians	32.58	2.60
Sikhs	32.28	1.89
Buddhists	17.33	0.71
Jains	28.49	0.48
Others	38.11	0.40

Although the Hindus are in overwhelming majority, figures show that their rate of increases over the decade ending 1971 has been, but for the minor population of Buddhists, the lowest. Muslims, the community most numerous next to Hindus, have had a rate of increase of 7.15 per cent more than Hindus. Details of the 1981 census are not available, yet it is most likely that there has been a further increase in the period 1971 81. The demographic balance, therefore, has not been maintained. The problem of minorities becomes a little more complicated in the light of this trend. The question remains not merely what the place of minorities is or will be in

94 *Racial Proverbs*, (ed.). S.G. Champion, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1938, p. 407.

95 *India 1980*, Publications Division, Government of India, p. 11, Table 9.

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independent India, but also how long will the minorities remain minorities.

After having acceded to a homeland for Muslims, India has relapsed into the creed of secularism, and this in principle has been reiterated by prime minister, Mrs Gandhi. Addressing the all-India Congress Committee at Bangalore on 12 July 1969, she said 'the basic principles and policies are commitment and deep involvement with the policy of secularism'.[96]

The course of secularism, however, has not run smooth. Communal frenzy of the worst kind followed immediately after partition. There were riots in Baroda, Ranchi and Indore thereafter, and in September 1969, 94 persons died in a four day communal orgy. In June 1972 there were communal disturbances in Varanasi and Ferozabad (in Uttar Pradesh) over the Aligarh Muslim University (Amendment) Act. About fifteen people were killed in police firing. Communal riots have been occurring sporadically in Moradabad, Aligarh, Varanasi and other places. In November 1966 insensate fury gripped a procession of about 300 sadhus who had gathered to protest against cow slaughter and they ransacked the streets of Delhi for more than two hours. Seven persons were killed and two hundred hurt.

Mahatma Gandhi was a great champion of Hindu-Muslim unity. 'I have no shadow of a doubt' he wrote about it 'that our hearts will meet some day. What seems impossible today for us, God will make possible tomorrow. For that day I work, live and pray'.[97] And again 'Any third power may easily enslave India so long as we Hindus and Mussalmans are ready to cut each other's throats. Hindu-Muslim unity means not only unity between Hindus and Musalmans, but also between all those who believe India to be their home, no matter to what faith they belong'.[98] Were it not for Mahatma Gandhi's personal endeavours, the communal holocaust after

96 *India, the Speeches and Reminiscences of Indira Gandhi*, Rupa & Co., 1975, p. 100.

97 Gandhi Series 3, *To the Hindus and Muslims* (ed.) Anand T. Hingorani, p. 387.

98 *Ibid*, p. 53.

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partition would have been bloodier. Ever since independence various attempts have been made to cement Hindu-Muslim unity. Urdu has been encouraged and Urdu academies formed in many states to give recognition to prominent Hindu writers. National integration programmes emphasise Hindu-Muslim unity. The Wakf Act of 1954 directed state governments to appoint commissioners of wakfs for surveying wakf property. A central council of wakf was created to advise wakf boards in the states. Provision was made for registration of wakfs and the duties of mutawallis were prescribed.

Marriage laws have been codified in different Acts to fulfil the needs of various committees. These are the Indian Christian Marriage Act 1872, the Kazis Act 1880, the Anand Marriage Act 1909, the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act 1936, the Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act 1939 and the Foreign Marriage Act 1969. Further the Special Marriage Act of 1954 enables marriage between people of different faiths to be registered. Marriages under any other form (provided they satisfy the prescribed requirments) have been legalised by this Act. Another step taken in the interest of communal harmony is the banning of political parties which spread communalism.

Foreign writers have tried to show that Muslims have been unjustly treated in india.[99] But this is not correct. It has been pointed out that Muslims have been given no quota of representation in the services as in the case of scheduled and backward classes.[100] One should not forget, however, that Muslims are not the only minority community in India. There are also Christians, Sikhs, Buddhist, Jains, Parsis and a host of others. Once minority representation is conceded, there will be no end to it. Besides, Muslims and other minority communities cannot be said to have been socially oppressed through the ages, as the untouchables have been. During the Muslim rule they were, of course, rulers. After independence, they have occupied the the topmost positions in India like those of the president of India, commander of the Indian air force, governors of states

99 See for example Dilip Hiro, *Inside India Today*, Routledge, 1976, pp. 232-9.

100 *Ibid*, p. 232.

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and secretaries of important departments of the government of India. Muslims have, therefore, not been unfairly treated in India. In fact they have received far better treatment than Hindus could get in Pakistan.

Although the imbalances in the demographic groups of the Indian population has had no immediate effect, the question is of importance in a country having so many diverse communities. Such problems have already started arising in states like Assam, and countries like Sri Lanka. The issue in India is linked up with conversions and population control. Unless a timely solution is found, something akin to what is happening in Assam might become the problem for the whole of India.

The Progress of Indian Industry

Summing up the industrial achievement of the post-independence period, *India 1981* comments, 'A century of industrial development pales into insignificance when compared with the rapid industrial stride made during over two and a half decades of planned development. Industrial production increased at an average growth rate of about 5 per cent per annum during the period 1970-78'.[101]

It can't be denied that industrial progress during the years of independence has been overwhelmingly more than that in the years of foreign rule. All that the English rulers were concerned with was the advantage which Indian industry could give to England. They exploited Indian industry rather than developing it. However a beginning was made in 1854 when the cotton mills were set up at Bombay with predominantly Indian capital and enterprise. The jute industry was founded at Calcutta in 1854 largely by foreign industrialists. Industrial output increased rapidly during the second world war. A number of new industries came up such as steel, sugar, cement, glass, chemicals, soap, vanaspati and engineering goods. But their production remained low and they fell much short of the existing demand. No appreciable progress could be made

101 *India 1981*, Publications Division, Government of India, p. 288.

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following independence. The average rise during the years 1946-50 was only 1.2 per cent per year. The average rate of expansion between 1951 and 1961 was about 6 per cent.[102] The record harvest of 1953-4, and earlier the Korean war, stimulated Indian economy. The five-year plans led to an increase in private industrial investments, though the increase was even more in public investments. The setting up of the Tariff Commission in 1952 (which replaced the old Tariff Board) encouraged industries producing consumer goods, raw materials, steel, non-ferrous metals, machines, chemical and medical products and equipment. The Mahalanobis Committee on Distribution of Income and Levels of Living 1960, and the Industrial Licensing Policy Inquiry Committee 1967 (ILPIC) went into the question of preventing emergence of private monopolies and concentration of economic power in the hands of a small number of individuals. As a result of their recommendations the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices (MRTP) Act was passed in 1969. Under this Act the Monopoly Restrictive Trade Practices Commission was set up in 1970. The Industrial Licensing Policy was modified in 1970, and then again in 1973.

The outcome of these changes has been to separate industries belonging to (a) the public sector (b) the small scale and the medium scale sector and (c) industries which can be taken up by big business houses i.e. those with assets not less than Rs 20 crore. The last named sector, that is the one for big businessmen has been specified as 'the consolidated list' and includes nineteen major industries. They are so exhaustive as to cover most of the important industries. Thus the initial object of preventing private monopolies and the concentration of economic power in a few hands has not been achieved. On the contrary what has emerged is just that which was sought to be prevented. 'The top 20 business houses' says a study of the grand tycoons, 'accounted for nearly 35 per cent of the total assets of the private sector'.[103]

102 Charles Bettelheim, *India Independent*, MacGibbon & Kee, 1968, pp. 234-5.

103 Dilip Bobb writing in *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 16-31 March 1981, p. 66.

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Post-independence industrial policy, which was announced in 1948 and revised in 1956, envisaged a mixed economy. Industries were classified under two heads, one those which would be completely state-owned, and the other those which were to be progressively state owned (private enterprise supplementing the efforts of the state in the beginning). Industries not covered by these heads were open to private enterprise. But the state could undertake any kind of industrial production it desired. Among the state owned industries were arms and ammunition, atomic energy, iron and steel, heavy plants and machinery, heavy electricals, coal and lignite, mineral oils and certain minerals, aircraft, railway and ship building, telephone and telegraph, generation and distribution of electricity and wireless apparatus (excluding radio sets). Industries to be progressively taken over by the state were aluminium, machine tools, essential drugs, diestuffs and plastics, fertiliser, synthetic rubber, carbonisation of coal, chemical pulp, road and sea transport, aluminium and certain minerals and non-ferrous metals. This policy was enforced by the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act 1951. The five-year plans did not have much impact on industry in the beginning but gradually more importance was given to it by them. In the first and second plan period 1951-61 three new steel plants were set up and a number of new industries in paper, cement, chemicals etc. started. The index of industrial production rose from 100 in 1950 1 to 194 1950-1, but there were shortfalls and delays also, as in the heavy electrical and fertiliser projects. From 1961 to 1969 (the third and annual plans period) progress was uneven, wavering between 11.3 and 0.6 per cent. In the fourth plan period 1969-74 progress remained unsatisfactory, falling steadily from 7.3 per cent to 2.2 per cent, against the expected annual growth rate of 8 to 10 per cent. In the fifth plan the envisaged average rate of growth was 7 per cent, while the performance exceeded this only in the year 1976-7 and lagged behind in the remaining years, with as low a figure as 2.6 per cent in 1974-5.[104] The sixth plan laid down a target of 7 per cent against which there was an overall

104 *India 1980*, Publications Division, Government of India, pp. 301-5.

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growth rate of 7.5 per cent in 1978-9. Although the start has thus been good, it is doubtful if the progress can be maintained. There was, for example, a fall in the capacity utilisation of the cement industry of about 18 per cent, accounting for a loss of more than Rs 400 crore per annum. While the installed capacity rose in 1980-1, production fell from about 19 million tonnes in 1979-80 to a little over 15 in 1980-1. The rates of coal output and of electricity have been disappointing in comparison to previous years. The growth rate in coal was less than 10 per cent in 1980-81 (till March), as against 40 per cent during the four year period from 1972-3 to 1975-6. Similarly in electricity the increase in 1980-1 was only 5 billion kilowatt-hours, as against 11 billion in 1978-9. In other important essential items too there has been a decline in performance. In the aluminium industry, production was only half of the installed capacity. In almost all others—notably steel, chemicals, nitrogenous fertilisers, pharmaceuticals and man-made fibres—production declined, the worst affected being fertiliser, which is of the greatest consequence in a predominantly rural country like India.[105] The five-year plans have not worked out well in the industrial sector. They have been bogged down by politics, unrealistic approaches, delays and inefficient working. For example the Nava Sheva port project (near Bombay), took 17 years for it clearence from the Planning Commission and in the meanwhile the cost of the project increased threefold from Rs 54 crore to Rs 150 crore. More than 20 projects, most of them relating to such essential items as rail transport and energy development, are pending clearance for over five years.[106]

The arch-disease of Indian economy is inflation and consequent price rise. The wholesale price index rose by 1.8 per cent between 1979-80 and 1980-81 (16.6 to 18.4 per cent). The poor response to the bearer bond scheme, introduced now for the second time, after being okayed by the Supreme Court

105 Figures taken from *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 1-15 June 1880, p. 70.

106 Prabhu Chawla writing in *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 1-15 June 1980, p. 70.

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shows that people are reluctant to part with black money. Production of articles is not related to their availability. One can get almost anything, provided he is willing to pay blackmarket price. The public distribution system of essential commodities at controlled prices has in most states either not worked at all, or functioned ineffectively. Big manufactures, like those of cars, keep on escalating prices sometime with justification, often without, so that they have climbed up beyond the means of all but the affluent. What is worse, the common man's articles like vegetables, textiles, shoes, tea, soap, groundnut oil etc., maintain an equal rising trend. At the same time the budget deficit has soared, and is likely to exceed Rs 2,000 crore by the end of 1981. All this means more taxation in an already overtaxed country.

The official attitude towards inflation and price rise is to increase price restriction. But economy cannot be controlled King Canute like. Restrictions only lower production instead of prices. Another ready solution adopted is to keep on browbeating the private industrial sector. This merely causes it to recede into the shell of underhand methods. The result frequently is that things suddenly go off the shelves of retailers, and swell the black market. A more sensible method would be to appreciate the genuine needs and bottlenecks of the industrialists and evolve practical and realistic solutions.

Another trend is nationalisation of industries. The Industries (Development and Regulation) Act 1951 gave government the authority to take over the management or control of any private undertaking on the ground of persistent mismanagement. This power has been exercised liberally after independence. A beginning was made in 1953 when certain air companies were taken over by the Air Corporations Act. Thereafter tea, coir, copra, coking coal and coal mines, iron and steel, cigarettes, metals, textiles, petroleum and its products, gas, jute and banking companies—all came into the net of nationalisation.[107] Apart from these, government has been running

107 Some of the private undertakings taken over were: Braithwaite and Company (India) Limited, Burn Company, Indian Standard Waggon Company, Laxmirattan and Atherton West Cotton Mills, Metal (Contd.)

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several undertakings on their own, most of them rather badly. The public sector industries with a turnover of Rs 1,289 crore in 1980 81 suffered a loss in that year of Rs 37 crore as against that of Rs 8.8 crores in the year before, the heaviest losers being Heavy Engineering Corporation, Jessop and Company, Burn Standard Company and Braithwaites.[108] At the commencement of the first plan period there were just 5 central government public sector undertakings. By 31 March 1978 these had swelled up to 153 with a total investment of Rs 12,851 crore.

As against this huge investment in the government undertakings, the real achievement in village and small industries, which benefit those areas where 80 per cent of India's 684 million people live, has been miserably small. The total expenditure in the five-year plans on these, up to the end of the fifth plan was only Rs 1,230.11 crore. It is true that a number of agencies have been established for the help of these industries, as for example, the Small Scale Industries Board, the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, the All India Handloom Board, the Coir Board and the Central Silk Board. But this can be called only lip service, so long as the actual financial assistance to village industries remains insufficient.

The so-called small-scale industries are really not so small as to be run by people in their village homes. Most of them are spread over urban industrial areas. These manufacture over 2,500 products including some sophisticated ones like TV sets ECG machines, hearing aids and cardiac pacemakers. They receive financial assistance from the state governments, financial corporations and banking institutions. By 31 December 1978 the assistance from banks to these amounted to Rs 2,765.65 crore.

Institution finance for industries is provided both by the central government as well as by the governments of the various

Corporation, Caltex Oil Refinery (India) Limited, Balani Ores (Limited), Kosangas Company, Parel Investments and Trading Private, Limited, Domestic Gas Private Limited and Messrs. National (Juet) Company Limited.

108 Figures *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 31 October 1981, p. 129.

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states. Some of the main institutions are the Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI) the State Finance Corporations (SFCs), the Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI), the National Industrial Development Corporation (NIDC) and the Unit Trust of India (UTI). Some of these assist industries in other ways also, apart from financing. The IFCI, (now a subsidiary of the Industrial Development Bank of India), provides training in modern management techniques. The NIDC provides engineering consultancy services both in India and in other countries like Iran, Kenya, Libya Malaysia, Tanzania, the Gulf States, Nepal and Italy. The ILCI revives industries which have either closed down or are facing closure, but which show promise of coming back to business by some help. Foreign assistance is allowed by the Indian government, but only in a very restrictive way and mainly to fill technological gaps and expand exports.

During the British rule India's foreign trade was confined to England and, as we have seen, it was more to exploit India than to benefit it. With independence this has undergone a change, and now we have trade links with almost all countries of the world. UK and USA, and in recent years, USSR and Japan, are among the principal buyers of Indian goods. Other important buyers are France, West Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Bangladesh, Singapore, Poland, Switzerland, Iraq, Egypt, Indonesia and Iran.[109] The largest supplier of goods to India has been USA, particularly due to the import of foodgrains. Other prominent suppliers are USSR, Japan, Belgium, West Germany, Italy and Saudi Arabia.

Unfortunately, despite many export incentives like transport facilities, market research, scarce raw material at concessional rates, facility of foreign exchange credits and so forth; India's balance of trade has been unfavourable during the ten years 1950-1 to 1978-9 except in 1976-7 when the exports exceeded imports by Rs 68.46 crore. In 1977-8 imports were Rs 6,025.29 crore and exports Rs 5,404.26 crore (trade balance Rs 621.03 crore) while in 1978 the imports exceeded exports

109 *India 1980*, Publications Division, Government of India, p, 343.

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by Rs 1,078.07 crore,[110] Among the export articles there are jute goods, cotton textiles, tea and coffee, oil cakes, fish, fruits and vegetables, unmanufactured tobacco, iron, iron ore, steel, engineering goods, leather and leather manufactures and handicrafts. The main imports are foodgrains, vegetable oils, metals, raw cotton and jute, petroleum, fertilizers, newsprint, chemicals, machinery, fibres and transport equipment.

A number of public sector undertaking have been set up by the government for trade promotion, as for example the State Trading Corporation of India (STC), the Projects Corporation of India (established 1971), the Cashew Corporation of India (1970) the Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation, the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation (MMTC, established 1963), the Mica Trading Corporation (1973), the State Chemical and Pharmaceuticals Corporation of India (1976) and the Central Cottage Industries Corporation of India (1976). Most of these corporations are subsidaries of the STC, HHEC. and MMTC.

The internal trade is by air, rail, river and merchant ships along the coastline. The coastal trade was of the value of Rs 23,262 lakh in 1976-7, the imports being of the same value as the exports.

According to a Reserve Bank of India review, industrial progress, which was lagging behind in the earlier part of the calender year 1980, has picked up in the second half :

'In the industrial sector, the overall index of production, rose by 4.6 per cent during July-December against a decline of 2.9 per cent in the first half of the calendar year, 1980.

'An important factor behind the faster pace of growth in industrial output is the easing of infrastructural constraints, while the overall improvements in labour relations has also contributed.'[111]

The performance has shown improvement no doubt, but still remains very much behind the official target which was fixed for 1980-1 as 8 per cent. A forecast for 1981-2 made jointly by International Computers Indian Manufacture Limited

110 *The Pioneer*, 17 December 1981 (UNI).
111 *The Pioneer*, 17 December 1981 UNI).

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(ICIM) and *India Today* envisages a growth rate of 3.1 per cent in industrial production in 1981-2, although it forecasts improvement from 1982 onwards.[112] However, seeing that industry has picked up in the latter part of 1980-1 and the overall index has already risen by 4.6 per cent, the results in 1981-2 might turn out better than the ICIM-*India Today* forecast.

In some aspects, indeed, Indian industry is showing rapid growth. Engineering goods, for example, which started being on the market from 1950, have made remarkable progress. In 1977-8 the production of commercial vehicles went up by 40 per cent and what was more out of 41,000 vehicles turned out, 4,000 were exported. In 1979-80 140,000 diesel engines were made, out of which 45,000 (nearly a third) were exported.[113] The computer industry has also progressed, though most of the parts are obtained from outside, and only assembled in India. In software, the programmes and other material which direct the machine in its operation, Indian engineers have proved themselves particularly efficient. Professor P.V.S. Rao, president of the Computer Society of India says 'I have no hesitation in saying that our software specialists can match those of the west, and there is still untapped potential here'.[114] A number of firms are in the computer market, prominent among them, the Hindustan Computers Limited (HCL), the Uttar Pradesh Electronics Corporation (UPTRON), the International Business Machines (IBM) a foreign firm which went away four years ago, the Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL) which came into business in 1971 and the Delhi Cloth Mills (DCM).

Other corporations in various fields, though doing large business, do not seem to be progressing too well. Such are, for example, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPC) with a turnover of Rs 1,172 crore, Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BCM) turnover Rs 936 crore, the Steel Authority of India Limited

112 *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 16-30 April 1981, p. 87.
113 *Ibid*, 16-28 February 1981, p. 114.
114 *Ibid*, 16-31 March 1981, p. 86,

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(SAIL) with a sales of Rs 1,940 crore in 1980, and the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) sales Rs 3,680 crore in 1980.

Although the government has been announcing a policy of export promotion, in actual practice it does not seem to be working too well. Competition has become a vital factor in the export market. In tea for example, Kenya and China, have become formidable rivals. Despite the fact that India produces 30 per cent of the world's tea (575 million kilogrammes), export earnings have fallen from Rs 541.6 crore in 1977 to Rs 412 crore in 1980. A falling trend in the prices of tea in the foreign markets, and rise in wages and in the cost of fertilisers, have doubtless contributed to a large extent to the fall in tea export. But instead of assisting the industry under these circumstances, government made it more difficult for it by making no relaxation in taxes which have been imposed on 40 per cent of its income by the central government as income tax and on the remaining 60 per cent by the state government as agricultural income tax. The manufacture and export of incense sticks which employs over five lakh people in the villages, is suffering due to high prices of sandalwood bamboo and other raw materials (which have gone up by almost 800 per cent. What is worse is that just at this time, when the industry needs government assistance, the Karnataka government, where most of the bamboo is, has placed restrictions on its use. Most of the incense stick manufacturers are in Karnataka, and now they have to buy bamboo at higher cost from other states. The carpet industry too is in the doldrums because of competition by China and Pakistan, and also due to lack of assistance from the government. Indian wool is exported instead of being utilised for making carpets, which can then fetch six times the price. Export of carpets has dropped and the government Handicrafts Export Corporation (HHEC) had orders for Rs 95 lakh only in 1980-81 as against Rs 2.5 crore the year before. The Kashmir sapphire industry has been ruined by a kind of cross-fire between the central and the state governments. The state government can't do the mining in the sapphire rock mines of Padar (350 kilometres east of Srinagar) due to lack of funds and internal dissensions, and will not let the National Mineral Development Corporation (NDMC) do it for them. The result

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is that even a hundred years after their discovery the mines have not been systematically exploited. So too is the case with the 500 megawatt Singrauli Thermal Power Plant, a project of the National Thermal Power Corporation. Due to internal tussles between the Uttar Pradesh government and the centre, the project is 'on the verge of suffering a serious setback which is likely to bring the planned capacity down to 200 megawatts from 500 megawatts'.[115] Many of the prestigious Indian projects taken up abroad, fail because of corruption, inefficiency and delays. For example the Engineers Projects India (EPI) took up a huge Rs 230 crore Ardiya Housing Project in Kuwait. It failed, with a sizable loss of about Rs 29 crore and Rs 18 crore in penalties. Similarly the 35th Brigade Camp Project (value : Rs 82.24 crore) and the Seif Palace Project (Rs 31.56 crore) were inordinately delayed. An official has been reported as saying 'EPI has earned the unique distinction of losing a rupee for every four rupees of work it takes on in Kuwait'.[116] Recently three Indian firms exported contaminated first-aid material to Britain. The British health authorities directed all hospitals, stockists and chemists, to burn the Indian supplied first-aid material after the samples were analysed and found to be infected by botulism, gangrene and tetanus. The health ministry is reported to be *examining* the matter. Whatever the result of this 'examination', India's name has already been besmirched.

Indian industry has failed to make a headway because of various factors. Prominent among these appear to be corruption, inefficiency, delays, rise in wages, strikes, overtaxation, lack of governmental assistance and protection where genuinely needed, in-fighting, scarcities of raw material, under-exploitation of natural resources and power shortages. Addressing the all-India Congress Committee at Bangalore on 12 July 1969, Prime Minister Mrs Gandhi said, 'Why are the public sector projects not flourishing as they should ? Because the people in charge of them are not people who are committed to the public sector....We must have people who have the right ideas, who

115 *The Pioneer*, 17 November 1981.
116 *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 1 October 5981, p. 134.

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are not for the sake of a job, who are not in it just to do something, but who are deeply committed to the basic objective'.[117] More than a decade has gone past, but unfortunately the kind of people she had in mind have not materialised.

The Philosophy of Foreign Aid

Foreign aid is for India a necessary corollary to the five-year plans, which became successively more and more ambitious. The dependence on external resources (apart from drawing on foreign exchange reserves) in the various plans was as follows :

Rupees (in crores)

First	*Second*	*Third*	*Fourth*	*Fifth*	*Sixth*
521	800	2,423	2,087	3,955	9,299

The first plan was largely directed at improving agriculture and connected facilities like power and irrigation, and in making progress in transport, communications, education and so forth. The second plan's object was large scale industrial development for which many items, not then available in India, had to be imported. Bad harvests upset calculations, and India was forced to seek a large slice as foreign aid. Once the crutch was adopted, dependence on it increased more and more, as the above figures will show. Although foreign assistance is being obtained from 24 countries (and agencies) some as small as Italy and Switzerland, the main ones are the USA, Soviet Union, West Germany, UK, Canada, Japan apart from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA).[118] The IDA's sanction of soft loan for Indian projects was $ 1,300 million (about 36 per cent of the IBRD affiliate's total credit committed the world over). Much of this remained

117 *India, The Speeches and Reminiscences of Indira Gandhi* Rupa & Co, 1975, p. 107-8.

118 Figures up to 31 March 1965, P.J. Elridge, *The Politics of Foreign Aid in India*, Vikas, 1969, p. 188.

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unutilised because of slow progress in the execution of minor works. The commitment in the year 1981-82 is $ 2 billion, though this may not be fulfilled. From the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) funds, India has drawn a loan of $ 89 million out of the total amount of $ 253 million set apart by the Organisation for Asian Countries.[119] This works out to the biggest loan India has taken (15.3 per cent) with the exception of that from the IMF.

The latest and heaviest borrowing is from the International Monetory fund (IMF) to the extent of 5.8 billion dollars. The main reason necessitating this was mentioned by India's finance minister as difficulty in tiding over the adverse balance of payments position arising out of heavy oil imports worth about Rs 5,400 crore every year. The position about oil is, however, expected to ease in the wake of a decision of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to freeze oil prices up to the end of 1982. This has come as a great relief to India which is to import as much as 14 million tons of crude oil in 1982-83. Increase in oil production from Bombay High and other sources might save the country to some extent from paying for imports. Oil has also been struck for the first time in the Cauvery Basin (Palk Straits) by the Oil and Natural Gas Commission in September 1981. The flow rate in the stricture known as PH-9-1 was about 1,500 barrels a day. This find may have even greater effect in reducing India's dependence on foreign oil. The gross disbursements of foreign aid have shown a steep rise except for the years 1972-73 and 1976-80, as the following figures will show :[120]

119 The OPEC gives aid to developing countries (the Third World) which amounted to 905.3 million dollars in 1980. India was also one of the beneficiaries. Factors weighing with the OPEC are the overall general economic and financial situation of the country, its population, per capita income, current account position, resource balance level of international reserves, debt service ratio and net energy imports.

120 Figures based on *India Today*, 31 October *1981, p. 131.*

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(In crores of rupees)*

1970-71	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76
800	900	600	1,000	1,300	1,900

1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1780-81
1,600	1,250	1,200	1,400	2,341

* [Includes Rs 541 crore from the IMF Trust Fund]

Foreign exchange reserves (excluding gold and SDRs) remained practically constant between 1970-71 and 1974-75 at about Rs 500-600 crore, thereafter they mounted steeply till they stood at about Rs 5,500 crore in 1977-78 and then dropped to a little below Rs 5,000 crore in 1980-81.[121]

American foreign aid formed the largest portion of aid in early years (Rs 2,719.3 crore).[122] But later on the swing was towards Russia, particularly after USA rejected India's Bokaro steel plant project. The US is concerned about India's effort to solve her food problem, restrict population and remove administrative difficulties. American aid is more tied up with strings and more restrictive than Russian aid. It does not cover public sector non-infrastructure industrial projects, and this seems to give the impression that the US is really not keen for India's forging ahead industrially. Besides the US abstension in voting for the recent IMF loan to India and its massive military aid to Pakistan, India's immediate neighbour, and its lukewarm attitude to the Tarapur atomic plant for which it refused to fulfil its contractual obligations to supply enriched uranium; have alienated India. On the contrary the Soviet was ready to provide assistance to public sector heavy industries, oil exploration and refining. The Russians rapidly train Indian technicians and then hand over the project, without vexing themselves with the overall economic viability of India's plans. In foreign policy too Russia and India have been

121 *Ibid*, p. 133.

122 R.J. Eldridge, *The politics of foreign aid in India*, Vikas, 1969, p. 118, Table 1.

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steering closer together than India and the US. Russia supports India's stand on Kashmir. It also shows more interest than America in India's economic progress, particularly its concept of a 'socialistic pattern of society'. Nevertheless India has to seek US aid for foodgrains, in which Russia has not yet shown any interest, and which unfortunately India has to import, despite being predominantly an agricultural country.

Meanwhile new trade ties are being forged—as recently with the Philippines whom India offered to supply railway equipment, iron ore and textile machinery, in return for coconut oil copper concentrates, phosphatic fertilizers and cashew nuts.

Despite the fact that India has always been maintaining that it will not obtain any foreign aid by agreeing to restrictive conditions, such aid does imply certain constraints. As a borrower India has been eminently successful and also in its ability to pay back loans. This has been acknowledged in the world market. India has been able to persuade donor nations that 'her economic development is worth substantial financial backing. Furthermore, despite grave doubts on particular aspects, the concept of planning has received broad approval. India has received progressively larger sums of aid while substantially protecting her political independence'.[123] Speaking at a closed-door meeting of Commonwealth leaders on the present world economic scene, at Melbourne, India's prime minister, Mrs Gandhi, asked international financial institutions not to mix up their assistance to countries with ideological considerations which had little or no relevance to differing conditions in various countries. If they did so, she said, 'they would be defeating the very objective they would like to achieve'.[124] Still, it is difficult to obtain assistance without any conditions whatever. While approving the 5.8 billion dollar loan the IMF made it known that the disbursements would be 'based on the country having fulfilled specific objectives by the end of November 1981'. Foreign aid may be necessary to stave off a crisis for sometime. Nevertheless a loan implies repayment; and ultimately the only solution for stability

123 P.L. Eldridge, *ThePolitics of Foreign Aid in India*, Vikas, 1969, p. 177.
124 *The Times of India*, 4 October 1981 (UNI).

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is a strong internal economy. A man may need a crutch when he is weak, but he keeps on making an effort to regain his natural strength so that he can throw the crutch away. He does not want to keep it always. Foreign assistance is not a permanent solution of the economic problems. Besides unless these—as for example oil exploration, export promotion, industrial development and technology, unemployment and foodgrain shortage—are tackled effectively at home, to keep on solving them by money from outside, becomes a kind of vicious circle The population keeps swelling, so we import wheat at heavy cost; the foreign reserves fall and there isn't enough for petroleum. Instead of trying to tap new resources, we take a huge loan to pay oil bills. This has a repercussion on essential imports for industrial development, for which the easy way out is to again take foreign assistance. And so the foreign aid merry-go-round has moved, without ever a stop, through thirty-three years of independence, gathering more and more speed. It would indeed be a happy day for us all when the soundness of our resources brings down foreign aid to a zero; and a happier one when, having paid up our loans, we move ahead on our own.

Cracks in the Republic

Recently the Indian president N. Sanjiva Reddy observed that the states in India ought in his opinion, to get greater autonomy. Ever since independence the number of states and union territories recognised by the government of India has been increasing, till now there are 22 states and 9 union territories; some of them like Lakshadweep so tiny as to have only 34 square kilometres area and 40,000 population, and others like Madhya Pradesh with an area as large as 4,42,841 square kilometres (only a little short of the size of east and west Germany combined), and Uttar Pradesh with its staggering 111 million (only a little less than the population of Australia). The basis of division is diverse, not necessarily demarcatian by natural boundaries. Quite often the states have been formed on a linguistic basis. The first of these was Andhra Pradesh, which was recognised as a separate state on 1 October 1953.

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When independence came, the Telugu-speaking people were spread out in 21 districts, 9 of them in the Nizam's dominions and 12 in the Madras Presidency. An agitation was started for the creation of a separate Telugu state, which took a serious turn with the death of Potti Sriramulu, a patriot who had undertaken a fast on the issue. Ultimately the government of India had to accede to the demand. The erstwhile bilingual state of Bombay was, after independence, bifurcated into two linguistic states—the Gujarati speaking areas forming the state of Gujarat, and the area predominantly Marathi-speaking renamed as Maharashtra. The Karnataka state (1956) fulfilled the aspirations of the Kannada-speaking people to be recognised as a separate unit. Tamil Nadu was carved out from the old Madras province, and comprised the Tamil-speaking areas. The formation of other states brought various problems in their wake. Kerala was formed out of the native states of Travancore and Cochin, along with Malabar which was under British administration. Its area is only 38,864 square kilometres while its population is now over 25 million. Thus its density of population is the highest among the Indian states (549 persons per square kilometres, in 1971). Although most of the people are educated, they are unable to get jobs. The problem of food (of which it is 50 per cent short), transport, housing and so forth, is acute, largely because of the imbalance between area and population. The north-eastern Indian region which comprises the states of Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura and the territories of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram has developed a problematic insufficiency and unrest. The area (sometimes given the name 'Seven Sisters') is bounded by Tibet, Bhutan and China on the north, Burma on the east and Bangladesh on the west. It is linked to the Indian mainland by a small strip of land only 56 metres long. This region is underpopulated, with a low literacy rate, industrially backward, and to a large extent dependent on the centre for money. Most of the people live in villages which are miserably underdeveloped even as compared with the condition of Indian villages as a whole. In 1979 these states began to jointly agitate against those whom they called 'foreigners'. By this, they really meant those who were

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not part of the indigenous population, for none of these states had any citizenship of their own. The problem has become more tangled in Aesam due to large scale surreptitious immigration after partition and in the turmoil which followed the formation of Bangladesh.

Yet another variety of problem has arisen in states in which a certain element, fortunately small, has begun to agitate for secession from the union. This campaign is most prominent in the Punjab where there is a move for the creation of a 'Khalistan'. A brief analysis of these problems will now be made.

1. *The Panjab*

In September 1981 an Indian Airlines Boeing 737 was dramatically hijacked to Lahore. The hijack was organised by the Dal Khalsa, a new extremist organisation of old militant Sikhs. The ace leaders of the Dal were Dr Jagjit Singh and Sardar Ganga Singh Dhillon. Dr Jagjit Singh, a medico, the brain behind the dal Khalsa was finance minister in the first-ever Akali ministry formed twelve years ago in the Panjab. When the ministry was toppled and the Congress propped up a minority ministry, Dr Jagjit Singh packed up and went abroad, swearing vengence.

In 1980 Dr Jagjit returned to India to organise the 'Khalistan' movement, which was formally launched in April 1981 when he was in India again ostensibly to attend an educational meet. Ganga Singh Dhillon came to about the same time, and joined him. At the educational conference, which was only a cover for inaugurating the movement, Dhillon passed a resolution demanding a separate state for the Sikhs. The demand was subsequently backed by a number of letters written on 'Khalistan' letter-heads and 'Khalistan' stamps that were widely circulated in the Punjab. A month after the first demand for 'Khalistan', one of the two Akali Dal factions led by J.S Talwand, repeated it at a convention in Anandpur Sahib. They also wanted that a separate Sikh state should be given associate status at the UN.

Dal Khalsa achieved prominence when it led a *morcha* of

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'Khalistan' flags in the Panjab in association with Sikh holy religious rites. It contested the general elections but was routed and failed to make a mark even in a SGPC (Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee) poll held soon after, the only electoral victory secured by it being that of Jathedar Santok Singh of the Delhi Gurdwara Prabandak Committee.

So long as Giani Zail Singh was Punjab's chief minister, the extremists were kept quiet by various popular schemes such as the opening of the Guru Nanak Dev University in Amritsar, linking the main gurdwara by a 400 km. highway, which was given the name Guru Gobind Singh Marg, and so forth. After the emergency was clamped in June 1977, the Akalis become supreme. In April 1980 however they were defeated in the elections, and a Congress (I) government installed with Darbara Singh as chief minister. Ever since then the thwarted Akalis launched seven major agitations between August 1980 and September. In two of these more than 20,000 Akali volunteers were arrested. As a reaction Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, President of the Akali-dal launched a dharma youdh.[125]

Lala Jagat Narain, editor of the *Punjab Kesari*, vigorously opposed the 'Khalistan' move through editorials in his paper. Early in 1981 Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale sponsored an agitation to ban sale of tobacco in Amritsar. The local Arya Samaj leaders and non-Sikhs took out a huge procession brandishing cigarette packets stuck on poles and swords. Lala Jagat Narain, who had opposed 'Khalistan' was murdered on his way to Jullundur on 9 September 1981. Ten days later Bhindranwale, whose men had surrounded the offices of the *Punjab Kesari*, was taken into custody. The arrest sparked off a burst of violence in which twelve persons were killed, but it also increased Bhindranwale's prestige as a leader. Sometime later Jathedar Santokh Singh, sworn enemy of the SGPC, was killed.

These incidents coming closely one after another, as Mrs

125 *Yudh* means 'war' *Dharma* does not have any exact equivalent, in English. 'Righteousness' would perhaps be closest. 'Religion' or 'duty' would also approximate in meaning.

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Gandhi observed after she had herself assessed the situation: 'Politics and religion have got mixed up here. It is more of politics and less of religion'. Other factors too make the issue complicated, as for example the in-fighting among the Akalis themselves, the difference between the stands of the state and the centre, the laxity of the administration in taking firm action, and the possibility of the protagonists of 'Khalistan' getting support from abroad. The Indian home minister Giani Zail Singh said 'there are some doubts that some foreign forces might be interested in this movement. But it is difficult to be definite about it'. In any case it seems that the 'Khalistanis' miscalculated about getting support from Pakistan. In defiance of the international law, Ujagar Singh Randhawa and Hazara Singh Chakmishri crossed into Pakistan on 10 April 1981, carrying the 'Khalistan' flag and shouting slogans denouncing the 'Hindu *rashtra*' of India. The Pakistan authorities, however, promptly put them into prison.[126]

The 'Khalistan' move which has already caused a lot of bitterness among Hindus and Sikhs in the Punjab, is unfortunate. Curiously enough 'the records of the SGPC mention a resolution passed in 1946 demanding the status of a nation for the Sikhs. The resolution was moved by veteran Congressman, Ishar Singh Majhail and seconded by the former external affairs minister Swaran Singh'.[127] Thus the idea is nothing new, and in fact originated with Congressmen themselves. The violence that has erupted on the issue, the support sought from outside powers, the communal and religious exploitation by unscruplous politicians, are however ominous potents.

The government has, even though late, woken up to the seriousness of the situation. It is a good sign that the Longowal group is prepared to talk over the issue with the central government. But the matter of 'Khalistan' is tagged up with one other factor, apart from religion and politics which probably is more important than both of the grievances of the Punjab state against the centre. Chief minister Darbara Singh told an

126 *Weekend Review*, vol. 2, no. 31, 18-24 October 1981, p. 4.
127 *Ibid.*

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interviewer 'Punjab gets from the centre only 15 paisa out of every rupee spent on the plan, while some states get as much as 42 paisa. The state has been poorly served also in matters of location of heavy industry. Of about Rs 16,000 crore invested by the central government in various public sector projects up to March 1979, Punjab's share has been only about Rs 345 crore, that is a mere 2 per cent'.[128]

Whatever the following of the Khalistanis may be, Khalistan has become an issue which can no longer be ignored. Seeing this, it was rather surprising that when India's prime minister was asked if she was aware of the strength of the Khalistan movemenl, she replied 'I have no idea and I could not careless'.[129]

2. *Assam*

The problem of Assam is an equally tangled one, though in a different way. Assam had an area of over 2 lakh square kilometre (excluding the North East Frontier Agency) in 1947. During the years of independence it has been reduced to one-third of its original size, and today its area is only 78,523 square kilometre. On partition it lost Sylhet district, except a major portion of the Karimgang sub-division to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Thereafter this truncation continued, as one after the other Nagaland, Mizoram, and Arunachal Pradesh were formed from what was Assamese territory. Despite all this, the boundary lines between the new state and Assam still remains unsettled. Both Nagaland and Meghalya keep claiming more and more territory.

While the territorial losses have been crippling to Assam, its population strength has recovered partly due to its own growth of population, and even more because of the influx of refugees. The total population is now a little short of 70 million (in 1971 it was only about 14.6 million). It is in fact this gradual insidious growth that is the seed of the Assam problem.

Ever since the partition of India, and the turmoil preceding

128 Quoted in *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 31 October 1981, p. 378 & p. 43.

129 Reported in *The Pioneer*, 11 October, 1981.

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the formation of Bangladesh, refugees seeking jobs and land have been steadily trickling into the north-eastern region of India-the states called the 'Seven Sisters of the North'.[130] Assam has been the worst affected. Fearing that in a few years their region would be swamped by immigrants and the local cultural identity would be lost, all of these states started a campaign against these 'foreigners', known in Assam as 'bahirgats', in Meghalaya as 'udkars', in Mizoram as 'vais', and in Manipur as 'mayangs' By the term 'foreigners' they meant outsiders. Assam took the lead in the anti-foreigner campaign, and in 1979 demanded that the names of outsiders should be removed from the electoral rolls for the ensuing elections to the Lok Sabha. By 'outsiders' the agitators meant all those who were not enumerated in the 1951 census. It was obviously difficult to accede to such a demand, for 1951 was only the second year of the Indian republic. Besides, after 1951 a census had taken place in 1961, and then again in 1971. Still the agitators stuck to 1951. The rolls were not revised, and no election took place in 12 constituencies because the agitators prevented candidates from filing nominations. The agitation had broadly the support of all the parties in thestates, and assumed the form of a mass movement, paralysing the administration. Oil movement over the pipe line was affected, causing acute shortages.

Towards the end of January 1981 the central government took some measures to check infiltration of outsiders into Assam. Additional security forces were sent to the Assam-Bangladesh border to intensify patrolling. The river force was strengthened in order to check immigrants, and action was started to set up 20 more check posts. On 6 February the central government promised to hold elections only after the names of the foreign nationals were removed from the electoral rolls, and agreed to the main demands of the all-Assam Students Union (AASU). The AASU demands accepted by the centre were (a) The foreign nationals would be detected and deported from the country, (b) The names of foreign nationals would be removed from the electoral rolls before holding any

130 See *ante*.

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elections in the states, (c) It would be ensured that names of foreign nationals did not find place in the electoral rolls in future, (d) There would be proper surveillance on the border to check infiltration effectively, and (e) Indian voters residing in Assam would be issued identity cards with passports affixed. Three other demands made by the ASSU were not accepted. These related to constitutional safeguards for the people of the north-eastern region for the next 15 to 20 years to protect their identity; empowering the government to reject any citizenship certificate issued by the district authorities of Tripura and West Bengal; and withdrawing the authority of granting citizen certificates from the state governments, so that the foreigners detected and deported from Assam did not return to the state with fresh citizenship certificates issued by other state government. The centre, however, promised to examine these matters further.

The agreement did not end the impasse, because there was difference of opinion between the central government and the state relating to the base year which would be taken for purposes of removing the names of outsiders from the electoral rolls. The union home minister met almost all political parties at Gauhati, and, with the exception of the People's Democratic Front, all were agreed that the base year should be 1971. This was followed up by a meeting under the chairmanship of the prime minister at New Delhi on 1 March 1980, but although it was pressed in it that the base year should be 1971, no decision on the point was reached, and the matter was left open to negotiation.

Talks were held on 12 March between the central government and the AASU and AAGSP (all-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad). But these broke down. The central government wanted the base year as 1971, while the Assam parties stoutly maintained that it should be 1951. On 15 March 1980 the prime minister said that the demands of the students in the state to make 1951 the base year was not acceptable to the central government, as it 'cuts into the very concept of Indian nationalism'. While it was agreed that 'real foreigners' should be deported, it had to be ensured that genuine Indian citizens were not harassed. There were many people who had migrated

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to the state years ago and uprooting them would create many problems.

With the breakdown of the talks, Assam was plunged into a holocaust of violence. The agitators staged demonstrations, bandhs and rallies, picketed offices, and launched civil disobedience. The administration reacted by suppressing them with the help of repressive measures. On 24 March 1980 the Chhatra Parishad (I) and the Youth Congress (I) workers launched an economic blockade which, however, was withdrawn on 1 April after talks in New Delhi. Addressing the 57th annual conference of Delhi University, Mrs Gandhi said it was 'simplistic to imagine that if Bengalis went out of Assam, Assamese from Bengal, Tamilians from Karnataka, or north and south Indians from Bombay, more jobs would be available for local people and conditions would improve. The way out, rather was, development of agriculture and industry in a big way and this needed a nationwide effort'.

Meanwhile government equipped itself with an armoury of special laws to fight the agitation. Special powers given to the military including the air force, and the whole of Assam was declared a 'disturbed area'. Any military officer could open fire and kill people after giving due warning, in order to prevent a breach of the peace. Any premises could be searched without a warrant. An ordinance was promulgated on 6 April 1980 whereby the collector could prevent any transfer of land in Assam on the ground that the party to whom it was being transferred was ineligible or that the transfer was prejudicial to public interest. Another ordinance—the Essential Services Maintenance (Assam) Ordinance 1980—empowered the government to declare any service as essential service and to prohibit strikes in it. The Assam Disturbed Area Act 1955 and the Armed Forces (Special Power) Act 1958 were challenged in court. After a long legal battle the net result was that the shoot-at-sight provisions were stayed.

The agitation continued, with breaks and talks in between, the vexed situation defying a solution. Government were mainly concerned about the interruption in the flow of oil from the state to the refineries which had been starved of crude since 27 December 1979 when agitators led by AASGP began to

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picket the pipeline headquarters of the Oil India Limited at Narengi. The terrorists and extremists began to raise their heads. These were the Jatiya Rakshi Bahini founded by former State Security Bureau officer, Biraja Choudhury, the militant element of the AASU and the North Eastern Region Students's Union, the Purbanchaliya Loka Parishad (PLP) led by Hemanta Gogoi, and the Naxalite ridden Jatiyadi Badi Yuva Chatra Parishad. On 6 April 1981 E.S. Parthasarthy, commissioner of Assam's Plains Division, posted at Jorhat was assassinated by a pressure bomb placed under his office chair. There were other acts of sabotage, and bomb outrages also. The student agitators gave a call to boycott government offices, and the all India Radio, which they alleged was giving partisan coverage. On 26 May 1981, which was observed as 'Demand Day', about 250,000 people took out a procession in Barpeta sub-division of Kamrup district which was marked by violence. About 24 persons were killed. The AASU raised a volunteer force which set up more than 5,000 branches all over the state. The members were trained in first aid, civil defence and physical drill programmes, in order to build up courage and discipline. Talks were again held in November 1981 but nothing tangible came out. They centred mainly round a new 17 point draft proposal of the agitators. The student agitators now began to press for the acceptance of their new formula, which however could not be acceptable to the government as differences persisted on (a) the principle governing detection of foreign nationals, (b) deletion of their names from electoral rolls and their dispersal or deportation from Assam, and (3) the amendment of the Citizenship Act to deny citizenship rights to the progeny of illegal migrants and erstwhile settlers. Meanwhile the agitation, which had been suspended in January 1981 was re-started on 19 November with a 36 hour state-wide *bandh* in which normal life and work in government offices including banks, were affected in the Brahmaputra Valley.

Movement leaders denied any communal colour to the movement. Abu Nasser Iftekhar Hussain Bora an AASU executive said 'How can there be a communal tinge? We are all against foreigners'. But the Janata Yuva Morcha and Anand Marg instigated trouble. Another complication was that a number

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of Bengali-speaking persons had given out that their mother tongue was Assamese out of fear that they may be deported. These included mostly 25 per cent Muslims who had come across the border after 1951. The Assam movement leaders feared that once things were normal, Muslims from the other side would revert to their mother tongue, Bengali. The Assamese speaking population would then be reduced to 37 per cent or so, and become a minority. Thus they would become political orphans in their own state, the foreigners holding the balance. All their political leverage and the economic gains which went with it, would then be lost. The position could be different if Cachar, with an overwhelmingly Bengali population, was separated. But the Assam leaders did not want this to happen, for their state had been deprived of territory steadily through the years, and further diminution would not be in the interest of economy.

Assam continued to be disturbed. On 24 December 1981, parliament approved the extension of President's rule for six months from 30 December, in view of the fact that, as the union home minister Giani Zail Singh said, 'the political situation is still fluid and no ministry could be formed'. Hopes for a settlement, however, turned brighter. The people were fed up of the repeated agitations and violence. The state employees were under heavy restraint with the promulgation of the National Security Act and the ordinance banning strikes, and their involvement was getting less and less. A majority of the students appeared to be agreeable to accepting 1967 as a compromise figure. The various agitating parties were also losing their cohesion. All this augured an early settlement provided the AASU and Gana Sangram Parishad (GSP) executives softened, as also those branches of the agitators, like the Purbanchaliya Loka Parishad (PLP) and Jatiya Badi Dal (JBD) who seemed to have passed the point of no return.

In September 1981 a fresh move was made to reach a solution with a 12 point formula put to the agitators. Some student leaders had apparently agreed in principle to this. Another concerted move was sponsored jointly by the union government and the leaders of various opposition parties in Assam, preliminary to tripartite talks to be held in New Delhi.

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The AASU and GSP decided to participate in these talks; but only on the basis of their 17 point draft proposal, and on condition that the talks were 'formal, with minutes of deliberation kept', so that as a delegation of the agitating parties said, 'they were not accused of changing' their positions. Earlier the AASU and the GSP had called for a 36 hours statewide civil disobedience and announced a month long agitation programme beginning from 27 December 1981 and ending with a 12 hour 'Assam curfew' on the Republic Day (26 January 1982), which they were not prepared to suspend 'unless all repressive measures in the state are withdrawn'. Voicing their feeling about these measures the AASU wrote to the union home secretrary 'There is always a limit to everything and the people of Assam cannot be expected to tolerate the uncivilised and oppressive activities of such arrogant Changis Khans and Nadirshahs (meaning some of the senior officers of the government)....The police and CRP atrocities which had been unleashed in Assam during the movement have vitiated the cordial and congenial atmosphere built by brick, in 1980 and has pushed the people to a point of no return'. All this, said the AASU 'had raised one fundamental question before the Assamese "are the Assamese not bonafide citizens of India?" If they are, then why this imperialistic administration and colonial exploitation?'[131]

The government, however, was not willing to deport all those who entered Assam after 1961, for this would involve a breach of agreements with Pakistan and lead to the uprooting of almost three million people who had settled in the state. Most of these people would necessarily be Muslims.

In the tripartite talks held at New Delhi in January 1982, a four point agreement was reached on the border issue. According to this, physical barriers like walls, barbed wire fencing and other obstacles would be erected. Patrolling by security forces on land and riverine routes along the international border would be intensified, and the number of checkposts increased. The agreement provided that a road all along the border would be constructed and land between the border and

131 *The Times of India*, 27 December 1981.

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Meanwhile the Congress (I) formed a ministry headed by Keshab Chandra Gogoi. But it was not stable, and could not face a no-confidence motion soon after. On 19 March 1982 the 64 days old ministry—the shortest ever in Assam—was dissolved and President's rule re-imposed. The state, in which assembly elections are due only next year (1983), has been wrecked by the agitation on the foreigners's issue, and has been without a stable government for two years.

Futile talks and repeated agitations seem to have become the torturous pattern of the Assam scene during the past few years. Every effort to reach a solution appears to be the proverbial silver lining which gets lost time and again in the murky clouds of conflict. Unfortunately despite the failure of 15 rounds of negotiation, the only hope for Assam is the elusive conference table. Bhrigu Kumar Phukan, AASU's general secretary, said more than six month's back 'the time for discussion is now. Once the next phase of the agitation begins, holding negotiations would be difficult'. Agitation might be an expression of frustration, but it can hardly be a solution to the tangle. That is amply clear by the two years old sporadic agitation of Assam.

3. *Mizoram*

Mizoram is a union territory on the north-east corner of India, about 21,087 square kilometres in area and with a population only of 487,774. It is a land of hills interspersed by rivers which have created deep gorges. 'Mizo' means a highlander (mi—person; zo—hills or uplands). Mizoram signifies 'the land of the Mizos'. It was known as the Lushai Hills district in the British days. The Mizos belong to the Mongolian race.

The land was annexed to British India in 1891, but the internal administration remained with the Mizos. With independence, Mizoram became part of Assam. Unfortunately, however, it remained undeveloped, and the government did not take much interest in it. The Mizos felt neglected and thought,

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not without reason, that they did not profit by joining the Indian union. In 1959 a severe famine added to their miseries and the smouldering discontent erupted into open rebellion in 1966. The Indian army marched into Mizoram, and the rising was ruthlessly suppressed, killing many innocent persons also. A particularly harsh group village system was enforced. Under this the Mizos were forced to leave their houses and to live in larger villages along the main trunk road from Aizawl to Lungleh. They had to report back every night to the group villages because a night curfew was prevailing. The group villages lacked amenities, and became more or less slums. Besides, the Mizos, most of whom were agriculturalists, could not attend to their farms.[132]

Mizoram became a union territory in 1972. Disturbances, however, continued, and on 8 September 1974 the whole of the union territory was declared a disturbed area. Armed forces were authorised to aid civil authorities in maintaining law and order.

The situation in Mizoram remained disturbed. The Mizo National Front (MNF) issued a notice to all non-Mizos to leave Mizoram by 1 July 1979. There was a spate of violence, and the MNF and its allied organisations were declared unlawful under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. On 2 November 1978 President's rule was enforced. Elections to the Mizoram legislative assembly were held in April 1979, and the People's Conference Party got an absolute majority and formed the government with Brigadier T. Sailo as chief minister.

Although stability was temporarily established, the Mizo movement continued underground. There were armed encounters with the army and long periods of curfew. The Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) a students's organisation of long standing, became a militant branch of the MNF, and a source of constant headache to the authorities. The main leaders of the Mizos were Laldenga who commanded the largest calling, 70 years old H.K. Bawichhuaka, a former chief executive of the Mizoram

132 Facts taken from *Manorama Year Book 1981*, Manorama Publishing House, Kerala pp. 641-3.

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District Council (before it become union territory), Biakchhunga, and Thungchhuka who tried to organise a fighting section within the MZP. Laldenga, however, continued to be the unquestioned leader of the Mizo underground movement. He had at his command about 1,000 fully armed insurrectionists having their base in the Arakan Hills. It was Laldenga, therefore who was acknowledged by the central government as the representative of the militant Mizos.

The MNF had been declared unlawful, but the ban was removed by the central government on 7 July 1981. The party began to recruit volunteers to its ranks, and raised funds for its activity. Quite a bit of the funds came to the MNF as a kind of *chauth* or protection money obtained from bus or taxi drivers, traders and even from the pay-packets of government employees.

Laldenga's main thrust was to press for an independent Mizoram. Another demand, and one in which he was able to carry other groups with him including the one led by Bawichhuaka, was the 'unification of the Mizos'. This meant bringing together the Mizos of Assam, Manipur and Tripura in what might be a 'Greater Mizoram'.

Mizoram has been a nightmare for the Indian government, for which to a large extent the government's own initial misguided policy is responsible. Ever since the insurgents raised their head, government has begun to pour in aid. If they had done it earlier, the Mizos might have thought it was because of a desire to improve their condition. But now they feel it is a sop to the insurgents. A caption outside a government office in Mizoram expresses this clearly: 'Let us not forget that money started coming to Mizoram only after the insurgency'.[133] The impression was created that insurgency pays, and so the Mizos were always on a hit and run campaign to achieve the freedom within freedom which they aimed at. One of their leaders expressed the desire this way:

'If the negotiations (with the government of India) give us political freedom to decide as we please; if they unify the Mizos and free us from the fear of being completely swamped, we will regard 15 August as a true independence day.

133 *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 14 October 1981, p. 65.

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Otherwise we will continue to treat it as a day of slavery'.[134] If something is not done to heal old wounds, Mizoram might be yet one more crack in the Republic.[135]

4. *Manipur*

Manipur lies on the north-eastern boundary of India, south of Nagaland, with Burma adjoining it on the east and south, Mizoram on the south-west aud Assam on the west. Thus it comes very much in the troubled zone. A native state before independence, Manipur acceded to the Indian union and was made a union territory under the states Reorganisation Act 1956. On 21 January 1972 it became a full-fledged state. It covers an area of 22,356 square kilometres and has a population of about 1.4 million.

Manipuris have taken their cue from the Assamese who are their neighbours. They are against the influx of 'foreigners' by which they mean the Nepalese, who are settled in large number in what is known as the KKK belt, comprising Karong, Kngpokpi and Kanglatongpi; the Mizos or Kukis as they are known, who have largely occupied the southern districts; and the Bengali Muslims coming from outside. The tribals of Manipur itself who have settled in the northern districts are known as Meeteis. They constitute two-thirds of the state's population but are jammed up in one-third of its area. The movement against these 'foreign' elements, again led mainly by students as in Assam, began round about 1978. But Manipur was gripped by periodic leftist violence from long before that.

In 1964 a United Liberation Front was established to demand an independent country comprising Manipur, Tripura, Nagaland and Burma. Some members of this front were for moderation, but others wanted to take a hard line. The hardliners announced the formation, in 1968, of a revolutionary government of Manipur. Some of these extremists went to East

134 *Ibid* (observation made by Mizoram leader, Andrew Lalherlians).

135 The MNF has now been banned and negotiations with Laldenga called off. See Chapter 12. Outlook for the Future, More Troubles at Home than Abroad.

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Pakistan for arms and training. While they were returning 40 of them were arrested in Tripura.

By 1975 an active insurgent organisation, the people's Liberation Army (PLA) was formed under the leadership of a young man, Bisheshwar. In March 1976 Bisheshwar led a group of 14 members to Tibet, through Nepal. Between March 1978 and February 1979 the PLA indulged in violence, looting banks, and capturing and killing security forces.

In 1975-6 the situation was further complicated by the emergence of yet another body of insurgents, the People's Revolutionary Government of Kangleipak (Prepak). Instead of demanding independence for the whole of the north-east (as the PLA wanted), the Prepak only wanted and an independent Manipur. This organisation, led by R.K. Tulachandra, became active in 1978. They tried to get Chinese help, but were not successful. In June 1979 Tulachandra was arrested in Imphal, but only 11 days after, he escaped. In order to wreak vengeance, the Prepak launched an attack on police stations and security forces. On 16 February 1980 R.K. Tulachandra and three others, including Sushila Devi, a prominent insurgent, were captured. The government negotiated with Tulachandra and a cease fire for a month with effect from 14 March was decided upon. Tulachandra made an appeal through the radio to his comrades to respect the cease fire. But meanwhile a splinter group of the Prepak had come into existence under the leadership of Maipak Sharma. They took Tulachandra's move as a betrayal and killed Inaumacha, the Prepak president, and Chitrasen, Tulachandra's brother.

Manipur has since been subjected to continued violence. On 29 February 1981 three Assam Rifles *jawans* and one of their assailants, Brojen, of the PLA, were killed.[136] The Disturbed Areas and Armed Forces Special Powers Acts were introduced in Mainpur with effect from 8 September. The army has about three brigades in Manipur, and together with the Assam Rifles, the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), there are almost 20,000 security force

136 *jawan* means literally 'young', and is the familiar Indian term for a soldier.

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men in the state. Seeing that the hard core PLA insurgents are not more than 35 to 50, it is rather surprising that the movement has not been quelled.[137] One possible reason could be that it has the people's sympathy, if not their active participation. Another, that the insurgents have some kind of political support. In fact this has been the main outcry of the opposition leaders. A third reason is the long Burmese border. The insurgents are able to cross into it with ease and procure American made arms which are freely available. Fourthly, China appears to be assiduously working up anti-India sentiments against the rebels. Finally, the government intelligence system is inefficient, and some of the senior officers are not only lukewarm, but even indifferent to crushing the movement. Some time back the army had to conduct searches in the homes of two ministers. Two top Manipur IAS officers had to be taken into custody for questioning.[138]

The students are dissatisfied not only with the government's failure to check the influx of outsiders but also with the stepmotherly treatment accorded by the centre in the matter of development. The state finance minister, Rishang Aeisang, himself said that more than six big projects involving over Rs 80 crore were lying unsanctioned with the government of India for periods ranging from three to ten years. There are one lakh educated people without jobs. Many of the politicians and officers are corrupt.

It is sad that Manipur, the picturesque land of ancient culture and of the colourful Manipur dance, should be torn by violent strife. The chief minister, Dorendra Singh claims that 'a sense of security has returned to the people'. But events have not proved that. Unless the basic problems of the state are grappled with, a mere campaign against insurgents is not likely to do much good. If one set of them are wiped out, another might arise. A serious effort to develop this strategic frontier area would perhaps be more beneficial, for :

137 Figures from article by Seema Guha, *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 1-15 November 1980, pp. 42-4.

138 *Sunday* (ed.) M.J. Akbar, 11 May 1980, p. 35.

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'Prosperity's the very bond of love,
Whose fresh complexion and whose heart together
Affliction alters.'[139]

5. *Tripura*

Surrounded by Bangladesh on all sides, except for a narrow belt in the north-west where it borders Assam, Tripura is another state shaken by sporadic fits of violence because of being swamped by outsiders. The second smallest state in India, it merged with the Indian union on 15 October 1949. On 1 November 1957 it was declared a union territory and was given the status of a state on 21 January 1972. With an area of 10,477 square kilometres, Tripura has a population of 856,688.

After the partition of India, refugees from East Bengal began pouring into Tripura. The formation of Bangladesh led to another massive immigration, and the tribals were reduced to a minority. There were also complications due to exploitation of the tribals by political parties on the one hand and the English missionaries on the other. Tripura's immediate neighbour, Bangladesh, also kept on driving its tribals and non-Muslims from the hills of Chittagong into Tripura. Chittagong came to the British in the 19th century and was made part of British India. At the time of partition Sir Cyril Radcliffe, chairman of the Boundary Commission awarded it to Pakistan. As most of the population was non-Muslim, mostly Buddhist, the people of Chittagong presented a memorandum to the Boundary Commission, arguing that religion being the main consideration in effecting partition, the area should be tagged on to India, not to Pakistan. This was turned down on the ground of inaccessibility from India. But the tribals kept the Indian flag hoisted till when the Pakistani army marched into Chittagong on 18 August 1947.

The Chittagong tract was traditionally ruled by the Chakmas, and, apart from Hindus and Buddhists, it was the abode of about 550,000 tribals. Zia-ul-Rahman, the Bangladesh president launched a systematic drive to storm them out, resulting in

139 Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, iv. iii. 548-6.

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bloodshed. The Bangladesh military first killed about 230 people, mainly Buddhists, but in the operation lost 35 of its own men. In February 1980 a patrol party of the Bangladesh army was ambushed, and 21 soldiers including Major Kamal Reza, the commanding officer, killed. As a reprisal on 25 March, army officers summoned local villagers of Kaohali under the pretext of discussing with them repairs of the local vihara. As soon as they came, the army opened fire on the unsuspecting and unarmed people, killing 600. Nine viharas and over 1,000 houses were destroyed. These violent incidents were designed to get the Chittagong Hills cleared of tribals, so that Bengali Muslims could colonise it. The British had followed a let alone policy, and by an Act of 1900 had barred entry, habitation and purchase of land by the tribals. With the formation of Bangladesh this was reversed, and Bengali Muslims took large scale possession of tribal land, driving them forcibly away. By 1974 there were 96,000 Muslims settled in Chittagong (a 111.1 per cent rise since 1961), and after 1974 they increased by a further 20,000. The Chakmas raised an underground army, the Shanti Bahini, to resist encroachment, but they could hardly be a match to Bangladesh forces. In the time of President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the Bangladesh army raided Chakma villages and the air force bombed them. The atrocities against tribals continued in the reign of President Zia-ur-Rahman and they were driven out from a land which they thought was theirs.

Most of these tribal refugees have crossed over to Tripura. The first batch which arrived on 27 June 1981 was only of four. In the next two days there were 460. By the end of June they had swelled up to 1,000 and by mid-July to 2,200. There was a little gap, but by the beginning of September 1981 the trickle had become a flood. Over 14,000 refugees had settled in various camps in Tripura by the end of October 1981. The tribals of Tripura were not opposed to their settlement, but it did pose a problem for the authorities. And that brings us to the part played by the political element.

The political parties in Tripura belong to the communist and non-communist groups. The first to organise the tribals was the CPI (as early as 1948) under the leadership of Dasrath Deb

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Barma, a Calcutta University student, and a tribal himself. Another leader who emerged soon after, was Nirpen Chakravorty, who belonged to Comilla district which is now in Bangladesh. (Chakravorty is the present chief minister of Tripura and Dasrath Deb the education minister). In 1967 a group of young men formed a party to oppose the communist leadership. As they were all young (*juba*), they gave themselves the name of the Tribal Upajati Juba Samiti (TUJS). The TUJS had an understanding with the Congress, and supported the Emergency. The main demands of the TUJS were :

(a) Creation of autonomous district councils for tribal areas
(b) Restoration of the tribal reserved areas
(c) Restoration of alienated tribal land
(d) Recognition of Kakbarok as the official language of the tribals.

The TUJS insisted on 1960 as the cut-off year for restoration of tribal land, while the Marxist wanted it as 1969.[140]

In the elections held in December 1977 the CPI (M) won 56 out of 60 seats in the state and 17 out of the 19 seats in the tribal areas. The TUJS won the remaining seats. The result of this was that the non-CPI (M) parties began to back up the TUJS in order to weaken the CPI (M) hold over the tribals. The TUJS also turned militant in order to assert itself. These factors were even more intensified after the overwhelming CPI (M) victory in the 1980 parliamentary elections.

In January 1979 the TUJS threatened to set up a parallel government in the tribal belt bordering Mizoram in the east, and the Bangladesh on the west. From June 1979 the TUJS, joined by extremist communal organisations like the Amar Bengalee and the Ananda Marg, launched a campaign of violence. 20 schools and 11 markets, offices and medical centres were set on fire. Tripura Sena and Sangkrak, the hit and run squads of the TUJS, became more active.

The instability of the Assam situation also had an impact,

140 *Sunday* (ed.) M.J. Akbar, 15 June 1980, p. 21.

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and at a meeting of the TUJS on 15 March 1980 a decision was taken to launch an agitation seeking deportation of 'foreigners' who had come to Tripura after 15 October 1949, the day after Tripura formally acceded to India. In 1937 the population of the tribals was 70 per cent. In 1980, it shrunk to 29 per cent. The result of the TUJS agitation has been a spate of violence in Tripura, culminating in the Madai massacre, in which over 800 Bengalis including women and children, were massacred in cold blood and 10,000 houses were burnt. The conflict between tribals and non-tribals goes on, largely a creation of the unscruplous political parties in Tripura. This is unfortunate, all the more so as the state borders Bangladesh which is apt to exploit the situation to its own advantage.

The Flames Spread

The entire north-east of India has become a disturbed area. The Assam agitation has spilled out of its frontiers and engulfed the neighbouring countries of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Nagaland. In Nagaland trouble had petered out after the signing of the historic Shillong accord of 1975 on 11 November 1975. Nagas then accepted unconditionally the constitution of India and promised to surrender their arms. But thereafter T.H. Muivah, a Naga Maoist, organised guerillas to enter Manipur and Arunachala Pradesh and ultimately to revive the secessionist movement and insurgency in Nagaland. Muivah's group, known as the National Socialistic Council of Nagaland (NSCN) tied up with the People's Liberation Army (PLA) led by Bisheswar Singh, adding a new dimension to the uprising in the north-eastern region.

In Meghalaya too the influx of outsiders has been resented by the Assam-style students organisation, the Meghalaya Students's Union (MSU). Their complaint is not only against the Bangladeshis but also against Indians from other states who have come across and settled there; though they resent the ingress of Bangladeshis more, whose number has now swelled to over 150,000. The population of Bengalis, they say, has registered a growth of 77 per cent during 1961-71, as against a

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28 per cent increase in the tribals. The MSU have suggested the introduction of the 'inter line' permit. This would restrict the entry of Indians from other states. Another measure sponsored by them is a residential permit system for those wanting to settle in Meghalaya. The Meghalaya Assembly had in fact passed a bill to enforce this, but it was turned down by the centre. The tribals also complain of not getting enough jobs in their own state. In this way the seeds of the Assam agitation appear to be sprouting in Meghalaya also, and the student leaders of the MSU are getting more and more frustrated with the inattention shown to the indigenous inhabitants of Meghalaya.

An ominous sign is the spread of this movement westwards. Bihar students became concerned about their counterparts who have settled in Manipur, and formed the Pusu (Patna University Students's Union). Another organisation, the Bihar Bachao Morcha, which originated in 1978, wants the Bihar government to shift the headquarters of all private and public sector undertakings of Bihar, within the state. They also wish to force the government to rehabilitate Biharis driven out of Assam and Manipur. Another body, the youth wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), styling itself as the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parished (ABVP) is poised to agitate for the ousting of Muslims who have entered Bihar from Bangladesh. From a survey of Purnea, ABVP leader, Sushil Modi, concluded that its population 'registered an overall growth rate of 37.02 per cent during 1951-61 as against the state's average of 19.77 per cent. During this period the number of Muslims rose by a phenomenal 42.44 per cent'.[141]

The disturbed situation in the north-east is the combined result of many factors. The boundaries of these states have often been changed for administrative convenience. The British used the same reason for partitioning Bengal, a step which led to prolonged agitation. Such changes in the boundary, which the formation of new states necessarily involves, inevitably dislocates people and causes demographical imbalances. The area adjoins two countries viz. Bangladesh and Burma, from

141 Quoted in *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 30 November 1981, p. 43.

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11

Legislation Since Independence[1]

'The politicians are not our enemies. Nor are they hostile to us. They look at us critically because they want us to change our attitudes in tune with the changing times'.

Y.V. Chandrachud, Chief Justice of India

Speaking at the silver jubilee celebrations of the Andhra Pradesh High Court at Hyderabad, M Hidayatullah vice-president of India said 'The laws in India, particularly the procedural laws, a legacy of he British, are lengthy and cumbersome. We must do something to change these 200 year old laws and procedure'. He expressed his unhappiness with the multiplicity of laws, 'which hampered the speedy dispensation of justice'.[2]

Thc process of justice remains just as cumbersome and procrastinating as before. But the 'something' which the vice-president said, ought to be done to improve laws and procedure, has not materialised. In fact during the 33 odd years following independence they have become more involved and complicated. There has been a plethora of amendments, and

1 Amendments have not been given or discussed in this study. Only main Acts have been taken note of. The legislation of the various provincial governments has also not been included.

2 *The Pioneer*, 2 November 1981 (PTI).

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even the Indian constitution has been amended 45 times. Another feature has been legislation on trivial matters like fixing the salaries of judges and legislators, the taking over of industries and so forth. Instead of being simplified, laws have become all the more abtruse. With the numerous amendments made in almost all laws, it often becomes difficult even for those who practice the law, to remain abreast of it. Independence, however, brought a new trend in law-making inasmuch as much of the legislation has been enacted for the welfare of the people. But even here, quite a portion of social legislation, as for example the Sarda Act, the Dowry Prohibition Act, the Untouchability (Offences) Act, and so forth, remains unimplemented. No case, for example, has yet been brought up under the Dowry Prohibition Act, although it came into existence 20 years ago. Social legislation admits in fact the shortcomings of society in the matters which it enforces. If, for example there were no child marriages the need for the Sarda Act would not have arisen, or if the dowry system wasn't there, a enactment to prevent dowry would be redundant. But once it is acknowledged that a legislation is needful for combating a particular social evil which exists, it should be rigorously enforced. Enforcement unfortunately remains the weak point in Indian social legislation.

Legislation since independence has been prolific and multifarious. A number of subjects have been covered like the raising of taxes, services, social welfare, condition of workers, finance and commerce, nationalisation of industries, regulation of essential commodities, maintenance of law and order, reorganisation of states, and so forth.

1. Social Legislation

Legal measures had been taken in the social sphere even before independence, as for example the Indian Majority Act 1875 and the Guardians and Wards Act 1890, laying down the law relating to minority and guardianship, the Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929 to check child marriages, the Dramatic Performances Act 1876 to prevent the performance of obscene and immoral plays, and so forth.

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Social legislation after independence starts with the Hindu Marriages Validity Act passed on 15 April 1949 to validate marriages between Hindus, Sikhs and Jains, and their different sub-castes and sects. In 1952 an Act was passed to regulate the exhibition of films. This legislation, known as the Cinematograph Act 1952, provided that a film could not be shown without a valid certificate. In 1954 there was a Special Marriage Act to provide a special form of marriage in certain cases, and for their registration. The same year (effective date 21 May) there was enacted the Muslim Wakfs Act, which provided for the better management of wakfs. In 1955 a significant measure was enacted to protect the rights of untouchables. The Untouchability (Offences) Act 1955 provided punishment for the preaching and practice of untouchability, for the enforcement of any disability arising for it and for matters connected therewith. The Act was amended in 1976, and is now known as the Protection of Civil Rights Act. In 1955 too the Hindu Marriage Act was passed. This was to amend and codify the law relating to marriages among Hindus and to lay down the conditions and ceremonies essential for a Hindu marriage. It also dealt with matters regarding registration of Hindu marriages, restitution of conjugal rights, judicial separation, void marriages, divorce, bigamy, custody of children and disposal of property. The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act was passed in 1956. This was to amend and codify certain parts of the law relating to minority and guardianship among Hindus. In the same year the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act came into effect from 21 December 1956. This sought to amend and codify the law relating to maintenance among Hindus. Two other significant enactments were the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, and the Womens and Childrens Institutions (Licensing) Act, both of which came into effect from 30 December 1956. The former sought to provide, in pursuance of the International Convention signed at New York on 9 May 1950, for the suppression of immoral traffic in women and girls. Punishments were laid down for keeping brothels, living on the earnings of prostitutes, and for procuring inducing seducing or taking a woman or girl for the sake of prostitution. The Act also made

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provision for protective homes. The Womens and Childrens Institutes (Licensing) Act provided for the licensing of institutions for women and children.

In 1959 there were two enactments, viz. the Public Wakfs (Extension of Limitation) Act, which extended the period of limitation in certain cases for suits to recover possession of immovable property forming part of public wakfs; and the Haj Committee Act which established a committee in the ports of Bombay for assisting pilgrims to Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Iran and Jordan.

In 1960 there came the Children's Act (enforced 26 December), which was to provide for care, protection, maintenance, welfare and training of children, and rehabilitation of neglected or delinquent children in the Union of India. Another law enacted earlier (19 April) the same year was the Orphanages and Other Charitable Homes (Supervision and Control) Act. This made provision for the supervision and control of orphanages, homes for neglected women and children, and connected matters.

The Dowry Prohibition Act was passed on 20 May 1961. It prescribed a punishment of imprisonment for six months or fine up to Rs 5,000 for the giving or taking of dowry. But the central act makes the offence non-cognisable which means that action can only be taken on a complaint, and a police officer cannot of his own motion prosecute or arrest an offender without a warrant.[3] This takes away much from its effectiveness, for obviously very few parties would come forward to make a complaint. All that has happened is that some people (mostly government employees) print on wedding cards that the provisions of the Act are being observed! Dowry continues on a bigger scale, and dowry deaths have increased. In 1980 in Delhi alone 300 women committed suicide and 400 were burnt to death.[3a] The Act remains merely on paper.

There were two more laws on social legislation in the years after 1961. The first, the Foreign Marriage 1969, which came

3 Some states e.g. Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh have enacted Dowry Prevention Acts making the offence cognisable and non-bailable.

3a M.Z. Khan and K.P. Krishna writing in *The Times of India*, (The Mandap Into the Pyre), 22 August 1982.

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into effect from 31 August, was passed for making provision relating to marriages of citizens of India living outside. In the same year, the Registration of Births and Deaths Act 1969 (coming into force from 31 May) provided for the regulation of registration of births and deaths. In 1971 was passed the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (8 December 1971), the object of which was to provide for the termination of certain pregnancies bv registered medical practitioners. The legislation for terminating pregnancy is doubtless a step in the right direction. 81,21,004 MTPs[4] have been done since the inception of the programme. But the concept is too revolutionary for the villages, where most people live. Besides, it is practically impossible to provide the facility in the distant interior of the countryside.

Following a recommendation of the national committee for the international year for disabled persons, the central government has set up a working group under the ministry of education and social welfare to examine details of a proposal to provide protection to disabled persons and to promote their economy, rehabilitation and social integration. A law for protection of the disabled might materialise in 1982.

The only significant measures in Indian social legislation have been the law against untouchability and dowry. These too have remained largely ineffective. Even more important than legislation is the implementation of Acts passed. And in this respect social legislation cannot be said to have achieved its objective. Society has not changed from within to any appreciable extent in rural areas, and with the poor enforcement of the measures meant to transform it, the evils remain. Indeed they seem to have gone worse.

2. Measures for General Welfare

Some of the legislation was for ensuring the well-being of people in general; with a view to safety, health, medical facilities and so forth. A beginning was made just after independence by two enactments. The first was the Explosives (Temporary Provisions) Act 1947 which was to regulate the loading,

4 *India 1981*, Publications Division, Government of India, p. 106.

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unloading, handling, storage and conveyance of ammunition explosives and inflammable substances. The other, the Indian Nursing Council Act 1947, which constituted an Indian Nursing Council and established a uniform standard of training for nurses, midwives and health visitors. In 1952 another measure was undertaken for public safety, namely the Inflammable Substance Act, which declared certain substances to be dangerously inflammable and laid down regulations for their storage, transport, import and production. The Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act 1954, which came into effect from 30 April, was to control advertisement of remedies alleged to possess magic qualities and so forth. In 1956 the Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act provided for improvement and clearance of slum areas in certain union territories and for the protection of tenants in such areas from eviction. The Personal Injuries (Emergency Provisions) Act 1962 was enacted to make provision for the grant of relief in respect of certain personal injuries sustained during the period of emergency. The proper management of Sikh *gurdwaras* in Delhi was ensured by the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Act which was passed on 30 December 1971. The importance of preventing the ever increasing pollution of water was realised in passing the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act. This provided for the prevention and control of water pollution and for the maintenance and storing of wholesome water. The Act created central and state Boards for this purpose. This was followed up by another legislation ten years later for stopping air pollution, viz, the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1981, which became law from 29 March. Central and state Boards for the prevention and control of air pollution were set up.

Mention may be made of two enactments to preserve wild life and to prevent unnecessary pain and suffering to animals. These were the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960 and the Wild Life Protection Act 1972.

These enactments too, like those for social welfare, remain more or less of academic interest. Slums continue, and so does air and water pollution. Beasts of burden are flogged mercilessly and game laws are wilfully flouted.

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3. Industry Trade and Labour Welfare

Post-independence legislation is rich in the field of industry and labour. In fact the tendency has been towards too much control. A number of industries have been nationalised. Labour laws remain undefined and lack preciseness, leading to complex labour disputes.

Immediately after the British decision to quit India, the Industrial Disputes Act came into force from 11 March 1947. This provided for settlement of industrial disputes. It set up an Industrial Tribunal, a Board of Conciliation and a Court of Inquiry. The Rubber (Production and Marketing) Act 1947 made provision for the development of the rubber industry in regard to production and marketing of rubber, and for regulating the export from, and import into the provinces, of rubber. Restrictions were placed on the export of antiquities by the Antiquities (Export Control) Act 1947. The Imports and Exports (Control) Act 1947 gave wide powers to government to restrict imports and exports in general. The Control of Shipping Act 1947 was to control coastal trade and to fix shipping rates.

A beginning was made in labour law by the Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act 1947 for the welfare of labour in the coal mining industry.

Next year (1948) there followed two significant enactments. The Minimum Wages Act, which came into effect from 15 March 1948, fixed minimum wages for certain employments. It laid down hours for a normal working day, and a day of rest each week. The Factories Act (1 April 1948) regulated labour in factories. Conditions of work, facilities to labour, proper ventilation, leave wage and so forth, were provided. Employment of children less then 14 years age, was prohibited.

An Act for the development of the tea industry, the Central Tea Board Act was passed on 30 March 1949. This placed the tea industry under central control, established a Central Tea Board, and provided for levy of customs duty on tea exported from India. Another Act, the Public Companies (Limitation of Dividends) Act 1949, placed a limit on the dividends which may be paid by public companies.

In 1950 an Appellate Tribunal was set up by the Industrial

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Disputes (Appellate Tribunal) Act. In 1952 significant measures were taken to safeguard the interest of workers. The Coal Mines (Conservation and Safety) Act, passed on 4 March provided for conservation of coal and made further provision for the safety of miners. The Mines Act (15 March) amended and consolidated the law regarding the regulation of labour and safety in mines. Industrial goods were standardised and marking provided for them by the Indian Standards Institution (Certification Marks) Act 1952.

In 1953 the Tea Act was passed to supplement the legislation in 1949 for control of this industry. The Act provided control by the union of the tea industry, including the control, in pursuance of the international agreement made about it. It created a special Tea Board to look after the cultivation of tea and its export on realisation of adequate customs duty. The same year a Coir Board was established by the Coir Industry Act to enable the union government to control the coir industry. The Board fixed customs duties on coir fibre, yarn and other products which were being exported out of India.

In 1955 the Spirituous Prepartions (Inter-State Trade and Commerce) Act made provision for the restrictions on inter-state trade and commerce in spirituous medicinal and other preparations.

In 1958 there were two significant Acts. The Working Journalists (Fixation for Rates of Wages) Act fixed rates in respect of working journalists. The Trade and Merchandise Act (17 October) provided for the registration and better protection of trade marks and for the prevention of the use of fraudulent marks on merchandise.

There were three enactments for labour welfare in 1961. The Motor Transport Workers Act (20 May) provided for the welfare of motor transport workers and for the regulation of their working conditions. The Maternity Benefit Act (12 December) was to regulate the employment of women in certain establishments so as to enable them to get rest before and after childbirth and to provide for maternity and other benefits. The Iron Ore Mines Labour Welfare Cess Act, which came shortly after (19 December), was for the promotion of the welfare of labour

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engaged in the iron ore mining industry, the expenses of which were to be met from a cess on iron ore.

The Export (Quality Control and Inspections) Act 1963 provided for quality control and inspection of goods in order to better develop export trade. The Personal Injuries (Compensation Insurance) Act, passed on 8 October 1963 was a legislation for labour welfare. It imposed on employers a liability to pay compensation to workmen sustaining personal injuries. In 1964 the Industrial Development Bank of India was established by the Industrial Development Bank of India Act (16 May). This was to provide credit facilities for the development of industry. The Food Corporation Act, passed the same year (10 December) established food corporations for trading in foodgrains and other foodstuffs.

The object of the Produce Cess Act of 1966 (23 May) was twofold. One was to develop methods of cultivation by levying a cess on certain produce. The other was to market such products. The Seeds Act passed the same year (29 December) provided for regulating the quality of certain seeds for sale. The purpose of the Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act of 30 November provided for the welfare of the workers in *beedi* and cigar establishments and to regulate conditions of their work.[5]

The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act 1970 regulated the employment of contract labour in certain establishments. The Patents Act (19 September) the same year was to amend and consolidate the law relating to patents. The Payment of Gratuity Act 21 August 1972 was for payment of gratuity to employees engaged in factories, mines, oilfields, plantations, ports, railway companies, shops and other establishments. The Act provided a permanent benefit to all such workers. The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act passed on 9 September 1972 regulated the export trade in antiquities and art treasures, and provided for the prevention of smuggling and fraudulent dealings of antiquities. If necessary, antiquities could be compulsorily acquired under this law. The proper

5 *Beedi* is a cheap Indian version of the cigar (finger-sized) usually smoked by the poorer classes.

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upkeep of places in which they were, was also provided for. The Oil Industry (Development) Act 1974 established a Board for the development of oil industry, and for that purpose made provision for a levy of duty of excise on crude oil and natural gas.

The Tobacco Act of 1975 (12 May) provided for the levy and collection, by way of cess, of a duty of excise on virginia tobacco and a duty of customs on tobacco. These levies were for the purpose of developing the tobacco industry in India. The industry had already been nationalised earlier in March by the Tobacco Board Act. On 16 August there was a further legislation on tobacco, the Cigarettes (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act. This provided for certain restrictions in relation to trade and commerce in, and production, supply and distribution of, cigarettes. The Beedi Workers Welfare Fund Act and the Iron Ore Mines and Manganese Ore Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act were both passed on 10 April 1976. The former provided for the financing of measures to promote the welfare of persons engaged in *beedi* establishments. The other enactment was for financing activities to promote the welfare of persons employed in the iron ore mines, and manganese ore mines. In 1978 the Public Sector Iron and Steel Companies (Reconstructing and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, passed on 30 April provided restructuring of iron and steel companies in the public sector. In 1979 there was the Copra Cess Act in order to raise cess in copra for the development of coconut industry. The same year the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Services) Act of 11 June regulated the employment of inter-state migrant workmen to provide conditions of service for them.

4. Measures to Nationalise Industries

The trend after independence has been to nationalise the bigger industries more and more. Unfortunately quite often the industries taken over have not been run efficiently. Initially, for example, a number of private companies were generating electricity in Uttar Pradesh, like Martin Burn and so forth.

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Ever since generation has been taken over efficiency has fallen; so much so that the government is now thinking of entrusting some of the work again to private bodies.

The first step towards nationalisation was taken in 1956 with the Life Insurance Corporation Act. This provided for the nationalisation of life insurance business in India by transferring all such business to a corporation established for the purpose. Later on in 1972 the shares of insurance companies and undertakings were acquired by the General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Act of 20 September 1972.[6]

In 1957 was passed the Coal Bearing (Acquisition and Development) Act (8 June 1957). This was to establish in the economic interest of India greater public control over the coal mining industry and its development by providing for the acquisition by the state of unworked land containing or likely to contain coal deposits or rights in or over such land, for the extinguishment or modification of such rights accruing by virtue of any agreement, lease, license or otherwise. In 1961 there was the Sugar (Regulation of Production) Act (enforced from 13 December). It was not meant to take over any particular industry, but established the general control of government over the regulation and production of sugar. The Act also levied a special excise duty on sugar produced by a factory in excess of the quota fixed for the purpose. Nationalisation of coking coal mines was effected by two enactments, one in 1971 and the other in 1972. Coking coal mines and coke oven plants were taken over by the Coking Coal Mines (Emergency Provisions) Act of 23 December 1971. The Coking Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act of 1972 had as its objective 'the acquisition and transfer of right, title and interest of certain coal mines to reorganise and reconstruct them for protecting, conserving and promoting scientific development of the resources of coking coal needed to meet the growing requirements of the iron and steel industry'. Next year coal mines were also nationalised by two enactments, namely the Coal Mines (Taking over of Management) Act of 31 March 1973 which announced a general take-over of all mines and the other the Coal

6 This is refered to in the legislation of 1972 (see later in this section).

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Mines (Nationalisation) Act of 30 May 1973 by which 771 specific coal mines were nationalised, many of them receiving a paltry sum of 4,000 as compensation. An Act of 1974, the Coal Mines (Conservation and Development) Act passed on 26 August, provided for the conservation of coal and development of coal mines.

Iron and steel were the next to follow. The Indian Iron and Steel Company Limited was nationalised by the Indian Iron and Steel Company (Taking Over of Management) Act of 3 September 1972. In the same year the insurance business was nationalised by the General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Act of 20 September 1972. The object was 'to provide for the acquisition and the transfer of shares of Indian insurance companies and undertakings of other existing insurers in order to serve better the needs of economy by securing the development of general insurance business in the best interest of the community and to ensure that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth in the common detriment, for the regulation and control of such business'. The apology was long-winded, and 'the concentration of wealth' which it sought to avoid remains even now a will-o'-the-wisp.

Textiles were the next to fall into the government net. The Sick Textile Undertakings (Nationalisation) Act of 1974 provided for the acquisition and transfer of such undertakings to rehabilitate them in the interest of the general public by the augmentation of the production and distribution at fair prices, of different varieties of cloth and yarn.

The year 1976 sounded the dirge for many big private companies. The Indian Iron and Steel Company (Acquisition of Shares) Act of 2 September provided for the acquisition of certain shares of the Indian Iron Ore and Steel Company Limited with a view to securing the proper management and affairs of the Company and the continuity and development of the production of goods. The Braithwaite and Company (India) Limited (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act provided for the take over of that Company 'for the purpose of ensuring the continuity of production of goods which are vital to the needs of the country'. The Burn Company

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and Indian Standard Waggon Company Limited Act provided for the nationalisation of that firm 'to ensure the needs of economy of the country and for the fulfilment of the contract for the supply of railway waggons abroad'. The Laxmirattan and Atherton West Cotton Mills (Taking over of Management) Act of September 1976 took over the management of these mills 'to ensure supply of certain varieties of cloth needed by the weaker sections of the community and also by the defence department'. Only two days after the Metals Corporation (Nationalisation and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act took over metal industries 'for the purpose of enabling the central government, in the public interest, to exploit to the fullest extent possible, the zinc and lead deposits in and around the Zawar area in the state of Rajasthan, and to utilise these minerals in such manner as to subserve the common good'.

The trend set by the large scale take over of industries in 1976 was continued in the subsequent years. Public interest and proper management, were the two watchwords of nationalisation. In 1977 the industries acquired were the Caltex Oil Refining Company which was a group dealing in petroleum, and the undertakings of the Yoga Societies, a social organisation. In 1979 were taken over the Bolani Ores Limited, the coconut industries (to be managed by a Coconut Development Board), the Kosangas Company and the Parel Domestic Gas Private Limited, both of which dealt in liquefied petroleum gas. In 1980 the National Company Limited (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act of 19 July was passed to take over Messrs. National Company in order to promote articles of jute 'which were essential to the needs of the Company'.

The spate of nationalisation has not ended. In January 1982 five jute mills were nationalised by the Jute Companies (Nationalisation) Act 1980 by paying the owners Rs 19,63,34,000. These mills are Alexander Jute Mills Limited, Union Jute Company Limited, Khardah Company Limited, the Kinnison Jute Mills Company Private Limited and RBHM Jute Mills Private Limited.

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5. Finance and Commerce

A number of Acts were passed in various years to give effect to financial proposals of the central government. Apart from these the legislation on finance and commerce during the post independence era was as follows.

In 1947 there were two enactments. The Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, which became effective from 11 March, was to provide for regulation of certain payments, dealings in foreign exchange and security and import and export of currency bullion. It also imposed restrictions on dealings in foreign exchange. Another regulation to control foreign exchange came 26 years after in 1973 (19 September). This was the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 'to consolidate and amend the law regarding certain payments dealing in foreign exchange and securities, transactions indirectly affecting foreign exchange and the conservation of the foreign exchange resources of the country and proper utilisation thereof in the interest of the economic development of the country'.

The other legislation in 1947 was the Capital Issues (Continuance of control) Act, 18 April 1947, which provided for continuance and control of capital.

In 1948 there were three Acts. The Rehabilitation Finance Administration Act of 23 March gave financial assistance to displaced persons to enable them to settle in industry or business. The Industrial Finance Corporation Act of 27 March, established an Industrial Finance Corporation for making medium and long term credits more readily available to industrial concerns. The Reserve Bank (Transfer to Public Ownership) Act was to bring the share capital of the Reserve Bank of India into public ownership and to regulate relationship betweeen the central government and the bank.

Next year the Indian Tariff (Amendment) Act 1949 amended the Indian Tariff Act of 1934, fixing new rates of Tariff. The Banking Companies Act 1949 consolidated and amended the law relating to banking companies. The Public Companies (Limitation of Dividends) Act 1943 was to limit dividends paid to public companies. The Chartered Accountants Act of 1 May 1949 made provisions for the regulation of the profession of

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accountants and to establish for that purpose an Institute of Chartered Accountants. In 1950 there came the Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act 1950, whose purpose was to prevent the improper use of certain emblems and names for professional and commercial purposes. The Contingency Fund Act 1950 made provision for the establishment and maintenance of a contingency fund.

The Tariff Commission Act, which came into force from 12 September 1951 established a Tariff Commission. The same year the State Financial Corporations Act 1951 (31 October), provided for the establishment of State Financial Corporations. In 1955 an important legislation was the State Bank of India Act by which the State Bank of India was constituted. The undertakings of the old Imperial Bank of India were transfered to it.

The Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act of 1956 was passed to prevent undesirable transactions in securities by regulating the business dealings therein by prohibiting options.

In 1957 there were three enactments to distribute the proceeds of certain taxes and levies among the states in accordance with the recommendations of the Finance Commission's report of 30 September 1957. The Union Duties of Excise (Distribution) Act, the Estate Duty and Tax on Railway Passenger Fares (Distribution) Act and the Additional Duties of Excise (Goods of Special Importance) Act—the first two passed on 30 September and the third on 24 December—were enacted for this purpose. The object of another Act, namely the Countess of Dufferin's Fund Act of 27 December 1957, was to provide for the transfer of the fund known as the Countess of Dufferin's Fund to the central government. The International Finance Corporation (State Immunities and Privileges) Act 1958 was to implement the international agreement for the establishment of the International Finance Corporation. The State Bank of India (Subsidiary Banks) Act of 10 September 1959 formed certain banks as subsidiaries of the State Bank of India.

The Agricultural Refinance Corporation Act, passed on 24 March 1963 provided for the establishment of a corporation for granting medium and long term credit by way of refinance or otherwise, for the development of agriculture. Another Act of 1968, the State Agriculture Credit Corporations Act,

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passed on 29 December that year, provided for the establishment of Agricultural Credit Corporations in states and union territories. A significant legislation was the Compulsory Deposit Scheme Act (22 May 1963), 'to provide in the interest of national economic development for compulsory deposits and for giving a scheme in relation thereto'. Another monumental enactment was the Unit Trust of India Act of 30 December 1963. This established a corporation with a view of encouraging savings and investment and participation in the income, profits and gains accruing to the corporation from acquisition, holding, management and disposal of securities.

In 1964 the Legal Tender (Inscribed Notes) Act came into force from 30 September. This was to restrict the negotiability of currency and other notes inscribed with messages of a political character. The Asian Development Bank Act of 30 May 1966 was to implement the international agreement for the establishment and operation of the Asian Development Bank. The Public Provident Fund Act 16 May 1968 was to provide for the institution of a provident fund for the general public.

In 1974 was enacted the Companies (Temporary Restrictions on Dividends) Act to provide, in the interest of national economic development, for temporary restrictions on the power of certain companies to declare dividends out of profits. In 1978 an enactment was made to check black money. This was the High Denomination Bank Notes (Demonetisation) Act of 30 March to provide in the public interest for the demonetisation of certain high denomination banknotes. Banknotes of the value of Rs 1,000, Rs 5,000 and Rs 10,000 were demonetised by this Act. The Interest Act, passed on 31 March 1978 was to consolidate and amend the law relating to the allowance of interest in certain cases. By another legislation, the Prize Chits and Money Circulation Schemes (Banning) Act of 12 December 1978, the promotion or conduct of prize chits and money circulation schemes were banned. In 1980 the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act of 11 July 1980 was passed 'to take over certain banking companies to control the heights of economy and promote welfare of the people in accordance with the principles of clauses

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(b) and (c) of Article 39 of the constitution. The Union Duties of Excise (Electricity) Distribution Act of 25 March 1980 provided for payment out of the consolidated fund of India, sums equivalent to the net proceeds of union duties of excise on electricity to the states.

In 1981 there was another legislation connected with the unearthing of black money. This was the Special Bearer Bonds Immunities and Exemption Act 1981. It came into force from 29 March, and provided for certain immunities to holders of Special Bearer Bonds 1991, and for certain exemptions from direct taxes in relation to such bonds to canalise black money for productive purposes. Special bearer bonds of the face of Rs. 10,000 were issued, redeemable after 10 years, i.e. in 1991, at Rs. 12,000 each. Two other Acts passed the same year (1981) were the Compulsory Deposit Scheme (Income Tax Payers) Amendment Act, which introduced certain amendments in the original Act of 1963, and the Export-Import Bank of India Act 1981.

6. Measures of Taxation

With the launching of the five-year plans in independent India, and the strains in the economy because of bad harvests and the wars with China and Pakistan, taxation became increasingly the remedy for meeting financial deficits.

There was a spate of taxation measures in 1947 just after the attainment of freedom. The Sugar (Temporary Excise Duty) Act of 11 March 1947 provided for levy duty on cartain sales. This was supplemented later by another legislation in 1959, the Sugar (Special Excise Duty) Act passed on 24 December, which provided for a special duty of excise on certain sugar. The Indian Finance Act, passed soon after on 31 March, discontinued duty on salt manufactured in or imported into the provinces, continued certain duties on raw cotton and jute, and enhanced others like those on tea. The Act also fixed rates of income tax and supertax. The Business Profit Tax Act of 11 April 1947 imposed a special tax on certain classes of income arising from business. The Taxation on Income (Investigation Commission) Act, 18 April 1947, was to prevent tax

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evasion and to ascertain if the actual incidence of taxation on income was according to the existing law and procedure. After a five year gap another tax was levied, this time on salt—taxation on which had been a ground for an agitation led by Mahatma Gandhi himself before independence. The Act was for 'the levy and collection of a cess on salt for the purpose of raising funds to meet the expenses incurred on salt organisation maintained by government and on the measures taken by government in connection with the manufacture, supply and distribution of salt'. The Medicinal and toilet Preparations (Excise Duties) Act 1955, provided for levy and collection of excise duties on medicinal and Toilet preparations containing alcohol, opium, Indian hemp or other narcotic drugs, or narcotics.

In 1956 there came the Central Sales Tax Act, whose objective was: 'to formulate principles for determining when a sale or purchase of goods takes place in the course of inter-state trade or commerce, or outside a state, or in the course of import or export from India, to provide for the levy, collection and distribution of taxes on sales of goods in the course of inter-state trade or commerce, and specify restrictions and conditions in which state laws imposing taxes on the sale or purchase of such goods of special importance shall be subject'.

In 1957 there were several enactments for taxation. The Railway Passenger Fares Act of 11 September provided for the levy of a tax on railway fares. This increased passenger fares from 5 to 15 per cent for different categories of distances. The Wealth Tax Act of 12 September provided for the levy of a tax on wealth. The Expenditure Tax (17 September) a most ill-conceived measure, subsequently repealed in 1966—introduced rates of taxable expenditure varying from 10 per cent to 100 per cent for expenditure ranging between Rs 10,000 and over Rs 50,000. Cotton fabrics issued out of mills were taxed by the Cotton Fabrics (Additional Excise Duty) Act of 17 September, which provided for an additional duty of excise on such fabrics. In 1958 there were two measures for taxation. The Gift-tax Act provided for the levy of a gift tax. The Sugar Export Promotion Act of 16 September was to provide for the export of sugar in public interest and for the levy and collection in certain circumstances of an additional duty of excise and sugar produced in India.

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An epoch-making legislation on taxation was the Income Tax Act of 1961, passed an 13 September. This was 'to consolidate and amend the law relating to income-tax and supertax. Next year the Customs Act of 13 December 1962 consolidated and amended the law relating to customs duties. [Another Act on the same matter was passed thirteen years later viz. the Customs Tariff Act of 18 August 1975.] In 1963 the Super Profits Tax Act of 4 May, imposed a special tax an certain companies. The same year Boards of Revenue for Direct Taxes and Excise Customs were set up by the Central Boards of Revenue Act 30 December 1963. The Act was also to amend certain enactments for conferring powers and imposing duties, on these Boards.

In 1964 there was the Companies (Profits) Surtax Act of 2 May, to impose a special tax on the profits of certain companies.

The Railway Passenger Fares Act (9 December 1971) provided for the levy of a tax on railway fares which increased the cost of train journeys. Simultaneously a tax on certain postal articles was levied by the Tax on Postal Articles Act passed on the same date. In 1974 there was a Bill to impose a special tax on interest in certain cases. This was followed next year by the Interest Act of 31 March to consolidate and amend the law relating to the allowance of interest. In 1979 the Additional Duties of Excise Textile Act imposed fresh duties on textiles. In 1981 the Cine Workers Welfare Cess Act was enacted, 'to provide for the levy and collection of a cess on feature films for the financing of activities to promote the welfare of certain cine-workers and for matters connected therewith'. The cess made production of films costlier and, as usually happens, the burden fell ultimately on the viewers of movies.

Taxation has steadily increased over the years, and that, combined with price rise, has crippled the Indian tax-payer. The government is reluctant to tax agricultural income, and so the burden of taxation falls on the town dweller. The value of the 1961 rupee is now less than 30 paise, i.e. almost one-fourth of what it was. Between the early 60s and the mid 70s the per capita consumer expenditure of the 'high spending class' has fallen by about 57 per cent. Despite this, excise

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duties cover more than 133 articles, and any item which is excluded is charged at a flat rate of 8 per cent. Petrol, coal, chemicals, textiles, machinery, tobacco, metals, foods and beverages, vegetable oils and fats, and so forth are all heavily taxed. Railway fares, transport, postage, have gone on increasing. The latest increase in railway freight came into effect from 1 January 1982, with an additional supplementary charge of 10 to 15 per cent. This would bring the railways an additional revenue of Rs 320 crore a year. Another rise with effect from 1 March 1982 is in telegram money order registration, telephone and telex charges; rental charges of phone installations going up from Rs 800 to Rs 1200 a year. These new taxes are expected to yield Rs 100 crore a year. The railway budget of 1982-3 put up the rail fares and freight rates again to net Rs 261.45 crore, and the general budget came out with massive taxation to yield the government Rs 533 crore. The tax squeeze has become torturous, particularly on the middle class townsman. The problem of 'daily bread' so engrosses the average Indian that he has little time or energy left for other things, and as a famous English writer said long ago: 'Neither will it be, that a people overlaid with taxes should ever become valiant and martial.'[7]

7. Legislation on Administration and the Political Structure

Acts relating to administration (including law and order) and matters like elections, legislatures and so forth are of seven main types. One is that which is responsible for the fixing of inter-state boundaries and creation of new states and union territories. Another relates to law and order and preventive measures, as for example those to stem strikes and disturbances. The third is to ensure and regulate supply of essential commodities. A fourth category is legislation made necessary in pursuance of international agreement and conventions. Then there are Acts relating to citizenship and fundamental rights. Sixthly, there is what might be called 'political' legislation, to regulate the procedure of elections, the seats in legislatures and

7 Francis Bacon (1561-1626), *Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms.*

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so forth. Finally there are the enactment which have given recognition and assistance to important institutions in the country. For the purposes of this study administrative legislation will be considered under the heads (a) law and order, boundaries and new states, laws made necessary due to partition and administration of the chief commissioners provinces, (b) essential commodities, (c) international agreements etc., (d) citizenship and fundamental rights, (e) political legislation and (f) recognition of important institutions.

(a) General Administration, Including Law and Order

In 1948 the Indian Territorial Army and the National Cadet Corps (NCC) were constituted by the Territorial Army Act and the National Cadet Corps Act. Next year the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) was constituted by the Central Reserve Police Force Act, 28 December 1949.

The Government of India (Amendment) Act 1949 amendment the old Government of India Act of 1935, and provided for extension of terms of office of members of provincial legislative councils. It also provided for the administration of chief commissioners provinces. The Influx from Pakistan (Control) Act of 22 April 1949 regulated movements into India of persons from Pakistan. Another Act of 1950, the Administration of Evacuee Property Act, 7 April, was to provide for the administration of evacuee property. Next year the Evacuee Interest (Separation) Act of 31 October 1951 made special provision for separation of the interests of evacuees from those of other persons, in property in which such other persons were also interested. The Displaced Persons (Claims) Supplementary Act 1954 was passed to dispose of pending claims. The Displaced Persons (Compensation and Rehabilitation) Act 1954 was to provide payment of compensation and rehabilitation grants to displaced persons. These Acts were a necessary outcome of partition. The Judicial Commissioners's Courts (Declaration of High Courts) Act 1950 declared judicial commissioner's courts in part C states as High Courts for certain purposes. The Preventive Detention Act of 25 January 1950 was made necesary for the security of the country. It provided

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for preventive detention for reasons of defence, foreign affairs, or security of India.

In 1951 was passed the Government of Part C States Act to provide for legislative assemblies and councils of ministers of Part C states. The Andhra State Act 1953 provided for the formation of the state of Andhra, increasing the area of the states of Mysore and diminishing that of Madras. The Absorbed Areas (Laws) Act of 30 April 1954 was to extend certain laws to the areas which, prior to the commencement of the constitution, were administered as excluded or partially excluded areas, or which on such commencement were absorbed in certain states. Another legislation of 1954 was the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, passed on 29 September. Though this would not strictly fall under the law and order head, it has been mentioned here because the idea was to prevent adulteration by levy of penalties and punishments. Despite the measure, food adulteration remains an evil which, instead of being wiped out, has grown greater.

In 1956 there were two legislations relating to disputes between states about river boundaries. The Inter-state Water Disputes Act was to provide for the adjudication of disputes relating to waters of inter-state rivers and river valleys. The River Boards Act provided for the establishment of River Boards and for the regulation and development of inter-state rivers and river valleys. There were other enactments also to reorganise existing states. The States Reorganisation Act was for reorganisation of the states of India. The new states of Kerala, Laccadive Minicoy and Amindivi Islands, Mysore State, Bombay State, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Punjab were formed. Territories of others were refixed. The Bihar and West Bengal (Transfer of Territories) Act, enacted the same year, was to provide for the transfer of certain territories from Bihar to West Bengal. The Territorial Councils Act of 30 December 1956, was for the establishment of Territorial Councils in certain union territories. In 1957 the Railway Protection Force Act of 29 August provided for the constitution and regulation of the Railway Protection Force (RPF) for the better protection and security of railway property. The Preventive Detention

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(Continuance) Act of 24 December was enacted to continue the Preventive Detention Act 1950 for a further period.

The Inter-state Corporation Act of 20 September was to provide for the reorganisatian of certain corporations functioning in two or more states by virtue of section 109 of the States Reorganisation Act 1956. The Naga Hills-Tuensang Area Act of 29 November was to provide for the formation of the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area of Assam as an administrative unit. In 1960, the Acquired Territories (Merger) Act of 28 December, was enacted to provide for the merger with the states of Assam, Punjab and West Bengal, of certain territories acquired in pursuance of agreements entered between the governments of India and Pakistan. The Dadra Nagar Haveli Act of 2 September 1961 made provision for the representation of the union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli in parliament and for the administration of the union territory.

In 1962 there were a number of administrative enactments. The Goa, Daman and Diu Act, passed on 27 March, provided for the administration of the union territory of Goa, Daman and Diu. The State of Nagaland Act of 4 September provided for the formation of the state of Nagaland. The Pondicherry Administration Act of 5 December 1962 provided for the administration of Pondicherry. The same year the Extradition Act of 15 September was passed for amending the law relating to the extradition of fugitive criminals. Another important enactment was the Defence of India Act of 12 December 1962. This provided for special measures to ensure the public safety and interest, the defence of India and civil defence, and for the trial of certain offences. Special tribunals for such trial were constituted by the Act.

In 1966 Haryana state was formed out of the existing Punjab state. As a consequence the Punjab state was to that extent reorganised. The relevant legislation was the Punjab Reorganisation Act of 18 September.

The Railway Property (Unlawful Possession) Act of 17 September 1966, was passed to consolidate and amend the law relating to unlawful possession of railway property. Another measure, the object of which was to restrict certain rights conferred by part 3 of the constitution in their application to the

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police, was passed with the idea of making the force more disciplined and effective. This was the Police Forces (Restriction of Rights) Act of 2 December 1966. In 1967 was enacted a law under which the central government could declare any association as unlawful. The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act of 30 December was passed for 'the more effective prevention of certain unlawful activities of individuals and associations'.

The Bihar and Uttar Pradesh (Alteration of Boundaries) Act of 22 May 1968 provided for the alteration of boundaries of of the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. An important step taken in the same year was the establishment of the Border Security Force for ensuring the security of the Indian border. This force was constituted by the Border Security Force Act of 2 September 1968. Two months after, the Central Industrial Security Force Act of 2 December provided for the constitution and regulation of a force 'called for the better protection and security of certain undertakings'. The Essential Services Maintenance Act of 28 December 1968 was passed for the maintenance of certain essential services and the normal life of the community.

In 1969 the separation of the executive and judicial functions was extended to the union territories by the Union Territories (Separation of Judicial and Excutive Functions) Act of 31 May. There were two administrative measures in 1970. The North Eastern Council Act 31 May 1970, and of 30 December 1971, provided for the setting up of a council for the north-eastern areas of India to be called the North-East Council. By the other enactment, the State of Himachal Pradesh Act, 25 December 1970, the existing union territory of Himachal Pradesh was constituted into the state of that name. Next year, in 1971, the state of Meghalaya and the union territories of Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh were created by reorganisaion of the existing Assam state, and the states of Manipur and Tripura formed. This was done by the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act of 30 December. The Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands Home Guards Regulation of 12 July 1971 provided for the constitution of a volunteer organisation in these territories for service in emergencies and for certain

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other purposes. The Dadra and Nagar Haveli Land Revenue Administration Regulation of 8 December 1971, was to consolidate and amend the law relating to land revenue in these territories.

There were three enactments relating to law and order in 1971. The first, the Maintenance of Internal Security Act of 2 July, was to provide for detention in certain cases for the purpose of maintenance of internal security. The second was the Defence of India Act (4 December) to provide for special measures 'to ensure public safety and interest, the defence of India and civil defence, and for the trial of certain offences'. The third measure was meant for the specific purpose of preventing people from melting small coins, as the metal of which they were constituted was of more value than the coin itself. It was also to prevent hoarding of these coins, which obviously was a preliminary step to melting them. The legislation for this was the Small Coins (Offences) Act 11 December 1971.

A momentous enactment in 1972 was the Rulers of Indian States (Abolition of Privileges) Act of 9 September. The aim of this was to 'amend certain enactments consequent on derecognition of Rulers of Indian States and abolition of privy purses; so as to abolish the privileges of Rulers, and to make certain transitional provisions to enable the said Rulers to adjust progressively to the changed circumstances'. The privileges, apart from privy purses, which were sought to be abolished, were exemptions from income tax, wealth tax, estate duty, and local taxes, immunity from prosecution, the right to fly their own flags and so forth.

In 1974 the old Code of Criminal Procedure was thoroughly revised and the amendments made in the period of independence incorporated. This was done by the passage of the Code of Criminal Procedure Act whose object was to 'consolidate and amend' the existing law.

The Betwa River Board Act of 10 April 1976 was to provide for the establishment of a Board for the creation of a reservoir at Rajghat by construction, on behalf of the governments of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, of a dam on the Betwa river of Rajghat, and for the regulation of the reservoir. Boundaries between Haryana and Uttar Pradesh were adjusted

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by the Haryana and Uttar Pradesh (Alteration of Boundaries) Act of 11 June 1979. In 1979 too special courts were established by the Special Courts Act of 16 May, to speedily try a certain class of offences.

The Essential Services Maintenance Act was passed on 23 September 1981, in order to prohibit strikes and agitations by employees of the central government, quite a number of whom, apart from being stationed in the capital, were spread out in manning vital services in the states as well. The Act was for 'the maintenance of certain essential services and normal life of the community'. It prohibited strikes in central services like those in posts and telegraphs, telephones, railways, ports, aerodromes, armed forces, defence and industrial undertakings.

(*b*) *Essential Commodities*

Price rise, inflation, shortages, the unsteady business market, and such factors, required the enforcement of a proper distribution system of essential articles, particularly so as to reach the poor. This could be accomplished only by legislation for the control of such commodities. A start was made in 1955 with the Essential Commodities Act which extended to a variety of articles like coal, automobiles parts, cattle fodder, cotton and woollen textiles, foodstuffs including edible oilseeds and oils, iron and steel and their manufactured products, paper including newsprint, paperboard and strawboard, petroleum, raw cotton and raw jute. The Act was 'to provide in the interest of the general public, for the control of the production, supply and distribution of, and trade and commerce in, certain commodities'.

In 1972 an Act was passed to control the price of newspapers, for which a maximum price chargeable was prescribed. The legislation, known as the Newspaper Price Control Act (26 May) was enacted 'to enable the public to secure newspapers at a fair price'. In 1980 a drastic measure, the Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Essential Commodities Act, was introduced on 12 February. This provided for detention in certain cases for the purpose of black marketing and for maintenance of essential commodities. Next year there

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was the Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act 1981 (passed on 2 September). This was to make certain special provisions by way of amendments in the Essential Commodities Act of 1955 for a temporary period, for dealing more effectively with persons indulging in hoarding and black marketing of and profiteering in essential commodities, and with the evils of vicious inflationary prices. The Act empowered state governments to set up special courts for trying offenders.

(c) *Legislation to Fulfil International Commitments*

Ever since independence, India has taken her place in world organisations as a free nation. Some enactments had to be made incidental to this. In 1947 the United Nations (Privil eges and Immunities) Act was passed for giving privileges and immunities to the United Nations. In 1960 the Geneva Conventions Act of 12 March, was enacted to enable effect to be given to certain international conventions evolved at Geneva on 12 April 1949, to which India was a party. The Foreign Award (Recognition and Enforcement) Act of 30 November 1961 was to enable effect to be given to the convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards, done at New York on 10 June 1958, to which India was a party. In 1971 an Act had to be passed to make provision for arrangements for international air transport services at certain aerodromes. This was done by the International Airports Authority Act of 8 December 1971. The Diplomatic Relations (Vienna Convention) Act of 29 August 1972 was to give effect to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961. The Carriage by Air Act passed in the same year (1972) on 19 December, was to give effect to the convention for unification of certain rules regarding the international carriage by air signed at Warsaw on 12 October 1929 and amended by the Hague Protocol on 28 September 1955, and to apply these to non-international carriage by air. The Tokyo Convention Act of 8 May 1975 was to give effect to the convention on offences and certain other acts committed on board aircraft.

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(d) *Citizenship and Fundamental Rights*

It is not proposed to discuss in this head the various amendments of the constitution on fundamental rights,[8] but to confine it to legislation on such rights by Acts of the central government. The first legislation on citizenship was in 1955 viz. the Citizenship Act, which was to provide for the acquisition and termination of Indian citizenship. A citizen was defined in the Act as 'in relation to a country specified in the first schedule, means a person who, under the citizenship or nationality law for the time being force in that country is a citizen or a national of that country'. In 1967 the Passports Act of 24 June was passed to provide for the issue of passports and travel documents to regulate the departure from India of citizens of India and other persons and for matters incidental or ancilliary thereto.

Regarding private rights, early in 1947 the first government legislation affecting private property was passed, namely the Requisitioned Land (Continuance of Powers) Act (24 March). This gave government the power to acquire and requisition land. In 1958 a similar legislation was enacted for public premises. This was the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act of 16 September 1958 which provided for eviction of unauthorised occupants from public premises. In 1957 was passed the Cantonments (Extension of Rent Control Laws) Act, to provide for the extension to cantonments of laws relating to the control of rent and regulation of house accommodation.

(e) *Political Legislation*

Having constituted free India into a democratic republic, it was found necessary to make changes in the legislative procedure and such other matters, from time to time. The enactments needful for this are considered under the political legislation head. The first enactment of this kind was made in 1950, viz.

8 These have already been discussed in the chapter containing the Indian constitution and will be discussed more fully later in this chapter also.

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the Representation of People's Act of 12 May. This was to provide for the allocation of seats in, and the delimitation of constituencies for the purpose of elections to, the House of the People and the legislatures of the States, the qualification of voters at such elections, the preparation of electoral rolls, and so forth. This Act was followed next year by the Representation of the People Act 1951 of 17 July. This provided for 'the conduct of elections to the houses of parliament and the houses of the legislature of each state, and the qualifications for membership of the houses, the corrupt and illegal practices and other offences, at or in connection with such elections and the decisions of doubt and disputes arising out of or in connection with such elections'. This Act was twice amended just after five years, in 1956.

On 1 January 1954 was passed the Prevention of Disqualification (Parliament and part C States Legislatures) Act which was to declare certain offices of profit not to disqualify their holders from being chosen as, for being, members of parliament or, as the case may be, of the legislative assembly of any part C state. In 1957 there was the Legislative Councils Act (18 September) which increased the strength of the legislative councils of the states, and created one for Andhra Pradesh. The Parliament (Prevention of Disqualification) Act of 4 April 1959 declared that the holding of certain offices of profit under the government would not disqualify the holders from being chosen members of parliament. These offices were those of a minister, chief whip, home guard, chairman of a syndicate, a sheriff of Bombay, Calcutta or Madras, a lambardar, deshmukh, patel and so forth.

The next political legislation was after a long gap of thirteen years. This was the Delimitation Act of 30 December 1972 whose object was 'to provide for the readjustment of the allocation of seats in the House of the People to the states, the total number of seats in the legislative assembly of each state and union territory of Delhi into territorial constituencies for elections to the House of the People and state legislative assemblies and union territories and Metropolitan Council, Delhi.' In 1977 the Disputed Elections (Prime Minister and Speaker) Act 1977 (18 April), provided for the authorities to deal with

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disputed elections to parliament in the case of the prime minister and speaker of the House of the People.

(*f*) *Recognition of Important Institutions*

Some of the legislation was to declare institutions which had achieved all-India fame, as institutions of national importance. The first such legislation was enacted in 1959 (24 December) and it was to declare the Indian Statistical Institute at Calcutta as such an institution. There followed in 1962 the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan (Allahabad), in 1964 the Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha (Madras), in 1966 the Post-graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh and in 1975 the Rampur Raza Library (Rampur).

(*g*) *Services and the Professions*

The service structure in independent India remained much as the British rulers left it. Subsequent legislation was mainly to consolidate and improve it within the existing framework. In 1947 there came the Prevention of Corruption Act (11 March) which was more effectively to prevent bribery and corruption in the services. The same year the Armed Forces (Emergency Duties) Act of 20 March provided for the imposition of duties in an emergency. In 1948 the Dock Workers (Regulation of Employment) Act was passed to regulate the employment of dock workers. The Employee's State Insurance Act passed on 19 April the same year, was to provide benefits to employees in case of sickness, maternity, employment injury, and so forth.

Two Acts were passed in 1950 in respect of the army and airforce. The Army Act of 20 May 1950 was to consolidate and amend the law relating to the government of the regular army. It prescribed conditions of service and the mode of punishment and courts-martial. The Air Force Act of 18 March did the same for the Indian airforce. In 1951 the All India Services Act (passed on 29 October) regulated the recruitment and conditions of the all-India services common to the union

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and the states. It laid down that all rules in existence from before would continue to remain in force.

In 1952 the Notaries Act (9 August) was passed to regulate the profession of notaries. The Cost and Works Accountants Act of 1959 made provision for the regulation of the profession of cost and works accountants. The law regarding legal practitioners was amended and consolidated by the Advocates Act of 19 May 1961. The Act also laid down the constitution of Bar Councils and the all-India Bar. The Architects Act of 31 May 1972 provided for the registration of architects.

Coming back to the services, in 1954 the terms and conditions of High Court judges in part A states were regulated by the High Courts (Condition of Services) Act of 20 May 1957. The Public Employment (Requirement as to Residence) Act of 7 December (made in pursuance of clause 3 of article 16 of the Indian constitution) provided for the requirement of residence of certain classes of public employment in certain areas. The Navy Act passed the same year on 27 December was to consolidate and amend the law relating to the government of the Indian navy. The Naval and Aircraft Prize Act of 16 December 1971 was to provide for the establishment and procedure of Prize Courts. In 1958 the Supreme Court Judges (Conditions of Services) Act regulated the service conditions of judges of the Supreme Court. The Administrators-General Act of 11 December 1963 consolidated and amended the office and duties of the Administrator-Generals of states. On 15 December 1971 was passed the Comptroller and Auditor-General (Duties Powers and Conditions of Service) Act which determined the conditions of service of the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India and prescribed his powers and duties. The National Service Act of 9 June 1972 was passed to give people an opportunity for public service. In September of that year came the Former Secretary of State Service Officers (Conditions of Services) Act 1972 which revoked the conditions of services of convented service officers (the Indian Civil Service, Indian Police etc). New rules came into force in respect of their pay, pension, retirement and so forth, and the central government assumed full control over them. In 1975 the all-India Services Regulations of 6 May granted indemnity in respect of the failure to lay before

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parliament certain regulations made under the all-India Services 1951 Act.

8. *The Press*

With a few exceptions, the British rulers were mostly for muzzling the press and made invidious distinctions between the English and the Indian controlled press. Even then the press managed often to express itself on government policy. With the coming of independence a number of liberal press laws were passed. Ironically enough, however, the earliest post-independence legislation placed more restrictions on the press. The Press (Special Powers Act) 1947 was 'to better control dissemination of undesirable matter'. The Press (Objectionable Matter) Act 1951 too, placed a bar against 'the printing and publication of incitements, crime and other objectionable matter'. The first attempt to improve conditions in the press was the Working Journalists (Industrial Disputes) Act 1955 which applied the Industrial Disputes Act of 1947 to working journalists. The Press and Registration of Books (Amendment) Act 1955 amended the old Act of 1967. It provided for the registration of newspapers, and established a press Registrar. The Press Council Act of 12 November 1965 established a Press Council for the purpose of preserving the freedom of the press and maintaining and improving the standards of newspapers in India.

Certain measures were taken for developing the press. In July 1964 a newsprint advisory committee was set up to advise the government on the import and allocation policy for newsprint. The committee was reconstituted in 1977. The Press Council of India was set up on 1 March 1979 under the Press Concil Act 1976. In 1978 a second Press Commission was appointed. The Press Information Bureau (PIB) has been created to acquaint people with the policies and programmes of the government through the press. Three prominent news agencies have been functioning for the dissemination of news. The Press Trust of India (PTI) and the United News of India (UNI) supply news in Engliah. The Samachar (amalgamation of of the Samachar Bharati and Hindustan Samachar) does so in

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Hindi. Despite these advances the total number of newpapers at the end of 1978 were only 18,446 (including all kinds like dailies, weeklies etc). The circulation remained 11.408 million copies, Hindi, and 10.229 million, English.[9] This is quite inadequate for a country with over 680 million people. Illiteracy, and the soaring prices of newsprint, which is largely imported, are the main hurdles in circulation.

9. *Medical*

Western medicine and medical research have made great strides during the independence era, but the indigenous Ayurvedic system has remained neglected. Enactment for the progress of medicine started early in 1948 with the Pharmacy Act of 4 March and the Dentists Act of 29 March. The former was for better regulation of the profession of pharmacy, and the Dentists Act constituted a Dental Council apart from regulating the profession of dentistry. In 1950 the Drugs (Control) Act of 7 April provided for the control of sale, supply and distribution of drugs. The Drugs and Cosmetics Act regulated the import, manufacture, sale and distribution of drugs and cosmetics. It prohibited the import, manufacture and sale of substandard, adulterated or misbranded drugs. The establishment of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in 1956 by the Act of that name was a memorable step in the development of medicine. The Indian Medicinal Councils Act of 30 December 1956 provided for the reconstitution of the Medical Council of India and the maintenance of a Medical Register for the country. Similarly the Indian Medicine Central Council Act of 21 December 1970 provided for the institution of a Central Council of Indian Medicine and for a Central Register of Indian Medicine.

In 1973 attention was paid to homeopathy, which had the advantage of cheap medicines within the reach of the millions of Indians who could not afford costly drugs. The Homeopathy Central Council Act of 19 December provided for the

9 Figures from *Manorama Year book 1981*, Manorama Publishing House, Kerala (ed.) K.M.Mathew,p. 466.

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constitution of a Central Council of homeopathy and for a Central Register of Homeopathy.

The Lady Hardinge Medical College and Hospital (Acquisition and Miscellaneous Provisions Act of 3 December 1977 was to take over the College by government in order to ensure better facilities for the higher medical education for women and for providing medical facilities for women and children in the union territory of Delhi.

10. *Transport*

With the growth of industries, transport also expanded. An efficient transport system depends on many allied factors like good roads, railways, seaports and airports, fuel, chiefly petrol and diesel, and safety in transit. The Indian railway system is the second largest in Asia and the fourth largest in the world, having a route length of 60,993 kilometres in 1979-80, and carrying about 21-80 crores tonnes of goods. India's national highways have a length about 30,855 kilometres, and the total length of the roads of India is 5, 15,337 km. There are 63 shipping companies of which 19 are engaged exclusively in coastal trade, 35 in overseas trade and the rest in both coastal and overseas trade. The traffic handled by the major ports during 1979-80 was 67,669 in overseas trade and 9,982 in coastal trade. 10 major and 16 minor ports are in operation. Indian cargo planes carried 1,04,636 tonnes of cargo and mail in 1978.[10] The figures are doubtless imposing, but transport, like other facilities, is not able to keep pace with the population. Indian trains and buses are overcrowded. Essential commodities, like coal, are not able to have smooth movement due to lack of wagons. Interior villages remain largely without any all-weather roads. There is pilfering of goods in transit, and in some states, like Uttar Pradesh, travel is by no means safe. However some progress has been made during independence through legislation on transport.

The first enactment was the Roads Transport Corporation

10 Figures are from *India, 1981*, Publications Division, Government of of India, pp. 347-64.

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Act of 4 December 1950. This established Road Corporations in the states. The Air Corporations Act of 1953 provided 'for the establishment of Air Corporations to facilitate the acquisition by the Air Corporations of undertakings belonging to certain existing air companies and generally to make further and better provisions for the operations of air transport services'. The purpose of the Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Act of 30 December 1956 was to permit licensing of conductors of stage carriages, permits and licences. The Act amended the old Motor Vehicle Act of 1939.

In 1958 the Merchant Shipping Act was passed. This was to develop and ensure 'the efficient maintenance of an Indian mercantile marine in a manner best suited to serve the national interests and for that purpose to establish a National Shipping Board and a Shipping Development Fund, to provide for the registration of Indian ships and generally to amend and consolidate the law relating to merchant shipping'. In 1963 port trust authorities were constituted for the major ports of India by the Major Port Trust Act of 16 November.

11. *Electricity, Petroleum and Atomic Energy*

Particular attention has been paid to energy in the past few years. In 1970 the Fuel Policy Committee was appointed to recommend a long-term national fuel policy. Its report was submitted in October 1974. A new Ministry of Energy was created the same year (October 1974). Stress was placed on the development of indigenous resources.

The total installed generating capacity in electricity at the beginning of 1980-81 was 31,025 mw. A capacity of about 2,778 mw was expected to be added during 1980-81 to bring the total installed capacity to 33.803 mw.[11]

The pioneering legislation in electrical energy was the Electricity Supply Act of 10 September 1948 'for the rationalisation of the production and supply of electricity.' The Act provided for the setting up of a Central Electricity Authority and Provincial Electricity Boards. The Act was amended in 1976 to

11 *India 1981*, Publications Division, Government of India, p. 268.

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enlarge the functions and scope of the Central Electricity Authority and to create companies for the generation of electricity.

In 1948 also was enacted the Atomic Energy Act (15 April). This was to provide for the development and control of atomic energy. Another legislation on atomic energy was the Atomic Energy Act of 15 September 1962 which was to provide 'for the development, control and use of atomic energy for the people of India and for other peaceful purposes.'

India has to depend on imports for meeting 65 per cent of its oil requirements. Efforts have been made and continue, for locating new oil resources, particularly offshore. Two principal organisations exist for the exploration and production of crude oil. These are the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) set up in 1955 and wholly owned by the government of India, and the Oil India Limited (OIL), established in February 1959, a joint sector undertaking shared on a 50:50 basis between the Burma Oil Company of UK and the central government.

The main legislation regarding petroleum is the Oil and Natural Gas Commission Act of 18 September 1959, the object of which was to 'provide for the Commission for development of petroleum resources and production and sale of petroleum and petroleum products.'

Although strides have doubtless been made in the development of energy, much of the rural area remains unelectrified. There are sudden power shortages, frequent power cuts and ever recurrent power failures even in India's capital towns. Petrol prices are prohibitive, and much of the country's foreign exchange is exhausted in heavy oil imports.

12. *Miscellaneous Legislation*

Some of the legislation related to matters like weights and measures, education, libraries and so forth. In 1954 the Delivery of Books (Public Libraries) Act of 20 May provided for delivery of books to the National Library and other public libraries. Another measure for libraries was the laying down of the administration of the National Library by the National

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Libraries Act of 11 June 1976. The Prize Competitions Act of 1955 provided for the regulation and control of prize competitions. In 1955 also an Act was passed (the Abolition of Whipping Act) which abolished whipping as a punishment. The Agricultural Produce (Development and Warehousing Corporations) Act 1956 was to establish corporations for the purpose of the development and warehousing of agricultural produce on co-operative principles and to provide regulations for them. Another connected legislation was the Warehousing Corporation Act of 19 December 1962. This provided for establishing and regulating corporations for the purpose of warehousing of agricultural produce and certain other commodities connected therewith. An important enactment in 1956 was the University Grants Commission Act, which made provision for the co-ordination and determination of standards in universities, and to establish a University Grants Commission for that purpose. In 1956 also, the Standards of Weights and Measures Act of 28 December was enacted to establish standards of weights and measures based on the metric system. The metric system was further extended to customs duties and cesses by the Central Excises (Conversion to Metric Units) Act of 20 September 1960.

In 1957 (4 June) was passed the Copyright Act which amended and consolidated the law relating to copyright. The Repealing and Amending Act of 12 September 1957 repealed certain Acts like the Drugs (Control) Act of 1960, the Press (Special Powers) Act of 1947 and the Press (Objectionable Matter Act) of 1951, the Railways (Transport of Goods) Act of 1947 and the Sugar Temporary Excise Duty Act of 1947. In 1957 also there were two Acts regarding the union territory of Delhi. The Delhi Development Act of 27 December was to provide for the development of Delhi according to plan. The Delhi Municipal Corporation Act of 28 December was to consolidate and amend the law relating to the municipal government of India. The Ancient Monument and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act of 1958 was to provide for the preservation of ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance, for the regulation of

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excavations, and for the protection of sculptures, carvings and other objects.'

The Employment Exchanges (Compulsory Notification of Vacancies) Act of 2 September 1959 was enacted to provide for compulsory notification of vacancies to employment exchanges. The Arms Act of 23 December 1959 was to consolidate and amend the law relating to arms and ammunition.

In 1961 the Deposit Insurance Corporation Act of 7 December established a corporation for the purpose of insurance and deposits. In 1963 (18 April) there was the Marine Insurance Act to codify the law relating to marine insurance. The Energy Risks (Goods) Insurance Act of 10 December 1971 made provisions for the insurance of goods in India against damage arising from energy risks.

The Limitation Act of 5 October 1963 was to consolidate and amend the law for limitation of suits and proceedings. Another legislation for court proceeding was the Oaths Act of 26 December 1969 which consolidated and amended the law relating to judicial oaths.

The Hire Purchase Act 1972 defined and regulated the rights and duties of parties in hire purchase. The Authorised Translation (Central Laws) Act of 5 December 1973 provided for translation of central laws in certain languages.

The Jawaharlal University was established in Delhi in 1966 by the Act of that name (22 December). In 1970 were constituted two independent agricultural universities by the Haryana and Punjab Agricultural Universities Act of 2 April 1970. These replaced the Punjab Agricultural University established by the Punjab Agricultural Act 1951. The North-Eastern Hill. University Act of 28 May 1973 established a teaching and affiliating university for the hill areas of the north-eastern regions.

Reforming The Legal Structure

Narrating the nature of British justice years ago in the mid-eighteenth century, Ghulam Hussein the author of *Seir Mutaqherin* observed: 'A whole life is needful to attend to their long, very long proceedings; and till a decision is given there is no comprehending what is going on, and what is likely to follow,

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nor what is the probable end of the business'.[12] The state does not seem to be any better now. Speaking at the silver jubilee celebrations of the Andhra Pradesh High Court on 1 November 1981 India's vice-president, M. Hidayatullah said the laws in India, particularly the procedural laws, a legacy of the British, were lengthy and cumbersome. He expressed his unhappiness with the multiplicity of laws, which he said, hampered the speedy dispensation of justice. 'We must do something to change these 200 year old laws and procedures' he said.[13] It would not be quite fair, after thirty-three years of freedom, to blame the British for the intricacies of Indian law and its tedious and involved procedure. It may have been a legacy from them, but surely we have had sufficient time to change it.

The machinery for law reform in India is the Law Commission which was first constituted in 1955, and has since been reconstituted from time to time. Its main function is to bring the law up-to-date. The Commission was re-constituted for a futher period of three years from 1 Septemper 1977 to the end of August 1980. On the expiry of the term it was further reconstituted under the chairmanship of former Supreme Court judge, K.K. Mathew. This new Commission started functioning from 14 December 1981. The terms of reference were as follows;

(a) To keep under review the system of judicial administration to ensure that it is responsive to the reasonable demands of the times and in particular to secure elimination of delays, speedy clearance of arrears and reduction in costs so as to secure quick and economical disposal of cases without affecting the cardinal principle that decisions should be just and fair.

(b) Simplification of procedure to reduce and eliminate technicalities and devices for delay so that it operates not as an end in itself but as a means of achieving justice.

12 *Seir Mutaqherin*, vol. 3, p. 210.
13 *The Pioneer*, 2 December 1981.

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(c) Improvements of standards of all concerned with the administration of justice.

(d) To examine the existing laws in the light of directive principles of state policy and to suggest ways of improvement and reform and also to suggest such legislation as might be necessary to implement the directive principle and to attain the objectives set out in the preamble of the constitution.

(e) To revise the central acts of general importance so as to simplify them and to remove anomalies, ambiguities and inequalities.

(f) To recommend to the government measures for bringing the statute book up-to-date by repealing obsolete laws and enactments or parts there of which have outlived their utility.

(g) To consider and to convey to the government its views on any other subjects relating to law and judicial administration that may be referred to it.

The objectives of the Commission were doubtless laudable, but the actual achievement in the field of reform has been frightfully poor. Between January and August 1980 the Commission was able to send six reports, making the total number of reports sent by it 87. The only action taken on these so far, has been to introduce a bill in the Lok Sabha adding irretrievable breakdown of marriage as another ground of divorce under the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955.[14] This is very little achievement for the cost and labour involved.

Meanwhile cases keep lingering on, often for years together. Undertrials remain in jails for period ranging for 3 to 7 years without a final decision. Procedure in civil courts is so involved and procrastinating that suits pend for years. Lawyers are expensive, so much so that India's chief justice, Y.V. Chandrachud, recently called for a ceiling on their income.[15] About

14 *India 1981*, Publications Division, Government of India, p. 410.

15 Speech at the silver jubilee celebrations of the Andhra Pradesh High Court, November 1, 1981.

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disposal of cases he said 'What would the common man think when a case is argued in the courts for months and months?[16] The procedure in courts is much as the English left it, and very few amendments have been made in this regard in the Codes of Criminal and Civil Procedure which govern it. Corruption remains, and during the years of independence it seems to have touched heights never touched before. Indeed the machinery of the law and law courts in India can hardly be said to fulfil the Indian constitution's objective 'to secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice, on a basis of equal opportunity, and shall, in particular, provide free legal aid, by suitable legislation or schemes or in any other way to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities.[17] One may with justification apply Anacharsis's observation to Indian laws 'Written laws are like spiders's webs, and will like them only entangle and hold the poor and the weak, while the rich and and powerful will easily break through them.'[18]

Confrontation Between the Judiciary and Parliament

The tussle between the judiciary and the legislature has been broadly on two scores. The first is the matter about amendment of the constitution (which also involves interpretation of the concept of fundamental rights), and the second is regarding transfer and appointment of judges.

(A) *Amendment of the Constitution.* The constitution has been amended as many as forty-five times after it was framed. The methods of amending the constitution are three. Articles which lay down the details may be amended by a simple majority of parliament. Those covering more important matters may be amended by a two-third majority of both houses of parliament. Thirdly, there are certain articles (which are specified) which require not only two-thirds majority of

16 *The Pioneer*, 1 November, 1981 (PTI).
17 The Indian Constitution, Directives of State Policy, Article 39 A.
18 Anacharsis : To Solon.

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parliament but also ratification by at least one-half of the state legislatures.

The amending article is 368. This was itself amended in order to enable the parliament to amend any of the articles affecting fundamental rights also (which in the original framework of the constitution could not be done). Thus while the framers of the constitution considered fundamental rights to be sacrosanct, those who put the constitution to use didn't. The amending power thus newly created, was put into execution in the 25th amendment of the constitution which took away the right to adequate compensation for deprivation of private property through acquisition or requisition. This was done by substituting the word 'amount' for 'compensation'. The tussle between the parliament and the judiciary started on this, and spread to the general issue of amendment of the constitution to take away fundamental rights. In Shankari Prasad vs the Union of India (AIR 1951, SC 458) it was held that an act of parliament would be valid even if it curtailed any of the fundamental rights conferred by part 3 of the constitution. This ruling was affirmed by the Supreme Court in Sajjan Singh vs the State of Rajasthan (AIR 1965, SC 845). In 1967, however, this decision was overruled by the Supreme Court in Golak Nath's case (AIR 1967, SC 1643). It was decided in Golak Nath's case that parliament had no power under article 368 to make any law taking away or abridging any of the fundamental rights under part 3 of the constitution. The 24th amendment of the constitution was made to neutralise the decision in Golak Nath's case. It gave parliament the power to amend any part of the constitution, including the part about private rights. The amendment also provided that the president of India was bound to give his assent to amending acts when they were presented to him. This made parliament supreme in the matter of amending all articles of the constitution. Parliament's stand was again questioned in the case of Keshavananda vs the State of Kerala (AIR, 1973 SC 1461:V 60 C 333). In this decision of the Golak Nath's case was overruled, and the validity of the 24th amendment upheld. It was held, however, that the 'basic structure of the constitution could not be changed'. By 'basic structure' was meant :

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(a) the supremacy of the constitution
(b) the republican and democratic form of government
(c) the secular character of the constitution
(d) the separation of powers between the legislature, executive and judiciary, and
(e) the federal character of the constitution.

Another decision of 1978 (AIR 1978, SC 771) was to the effect that the seven freedoms laid down by articles 19 of the constitution shall remain protected, subject however to 'reasonable restrictions'.[19]

The amendment conferring on parliament the supreme right to amend any part of the constitution and the judicial decisions supporting it, have been justified on the grounds (1) that the power was necessary 'to take up major schemes of social engineering on the basis of which the socialistic transformation of society could be achieved'[20] and (2) that the decision in the Golak Nath case 'virtually froze fundamental rights as framed by the original constitution makers and deprived the successors of the fathers of the constitution of any opportunity to amend or modify these fundamental rights if experience taught that they should be modified'.[21]

The fathers of the constitution, being eminent politicians, knew fully well that the constitution they were framing obviously meant that several governments would mount the saddle of governance one after the other. These governments would be of various strains and modes of thinking, and each one, being in the majority (otherwise it would not come at all), would have the unfettered right of passing what laws it wanted. The opposition could at best be voluble opposers, but when it

19 The seven freedoms are 1. of speech and expression 2. to assemble peaceably and without arms, 3. to form associations or unions 4. to move freely throughout the territory of India 5. to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India 6. to acquire, hold and dispose of property, and 7. to practise any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business. (Article 19 of the Indian constitution).

20 S. Mohan Kumaramangalam, *Judicial Appointments*, Oxford & IBH, 1973, p. 26.

21 *Ibid*, p, 20.

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came to the vote, which really determined whether the bill would get through, they would be helpless spectators. The fathers also realised that quite a number of the governments which would come, would have the requisite two-thirds majority to carry a constitutional amendment through. It was not surprising therefore that they thought there was something so valuable for the citizen that it should not ever be taken away. The fundamental rights, which they believed came in this category, were really fundamental. They were : the right to equality and freedom, the right against exploitation, religious freedom, cultural and educational rights and the right to property. In their wisdom they placed these rights above petty squabbles, vested interests and the temptation to rule rather than govern. They realised that it was only the laws which could protect human rights, not politicians, for as Montesquieu says 'In the state of nature...all men are born equal, but they cannot continue in this equality. Society makes them lose it, and they recover it only by the protection of the laws'.[22] The second point is whether the courts should be allowed to put a brake on those measures which aim at 'socialisation of society', and the 'eradication of feudalism'. Despite the sweeping powers assumed by the parliament almost eight years ago, a socialistic pattern of society remains an ever receding mirage. Inequalities in earnings, concentration of wealth in a few hands and abject poverty on the other; and wide differences in living conditions and opportunities, still exist. The feudalism of landlords may have been smothered in some places, but it has given place to the feudalism of authority, position, power and wealth. The voice of the common man is a whimper in the dark. It is a poor exchange for the deprivation of valuable rights. To err is, as Shakespeare says, human. Judges can make mistakes, and so can the politicians. But while the judiciary would be inclined to take an objective view, the basis of legislative action is often expediency.

(B) *Appointment and Transfer of Judges* The controversy regard appointment and transfer of judges had been going on

22 Montesquieu, *Spirit of Laws*, viii, 3.

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for a long time. During the emergency 16 judges were transferred to and from various High Courts. Thereafter in 1981 two chief justices, Krishna Ballabh Narayan Singh of the Patna High Court and Muhammad Kassim Muhammad Ismail of the Madras High Court, were transferred outside their home states. This was a departure from convention, and so was the supersession of three senior Supreme Court judges in the appointment of Justice A.N. Ray. Some leading advocates felt that such transfers and supersessions were made on political basis, and would demoralise the judiciary and weaken their independence. The controversy was, however, set at rest by the Supreme Court's verdict that such transfers could be made. In a momentous decision of 30 December 1981 the Supreme Court held that the constitutional requirement of consultation did not require the consent of the chief justice of India in the appointment of High Court judges. The three points decided in favour of the government's stand were (1) that the non-extension of the term of S.N. Kumar, an additional judge of the Delhi High Court was valid, (2) that the transfer of Justice K.B.N. Singh chief justice of the Patna High Court to Tamil Nadu was in order, and (3) that in issuing his circular of 18 March 1981 the Indian law minister, Shiva Shankar, had acted within his brief. This circular was issued to chief ministers asking them to obtain the consent of additional judges in the High Courts to be transferred anywhere the government wished to transfer them.

Regarding promotions, the fourteenth report of the Law Commission says 'It is obvious that succession to an office of this character (meaning that of the chief justice of India) cannot be regulated by mere seniority'. The danger in disregarding seniority, however, is that it can be a device for bringing in favourites. The confrontation between the legislature and the judiciary has had a temporary respite. But it may erupt again any moment. It is, of course, easy for the politicians to set at nought judicial decisions. It might be wise, however, to ensure that in the process they do not destroy what they themseleves had set out to create.

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12

Outlook for the Future

'The procedures and practices in the working of government offices a re cumbersome and dilatory...there is a general impression that it is difficult to get things done without corruption'.

Government Report 1964 : *Economist* (London) 28 March 1981.

People, People Everywhere

With its cities dark and thirsty, electricity and water making a nodding acquaintance, its streets bursting with people, its muddy and slushy sprawling villages and dry shrinking fields, its trains arriving hours late with donkey's load of people inside and clinging on to the roof, and its buses rattling along with the noise of steam-rollers; India painfully jogs along. What is it that makes this nation move at a snail's pace even after thirty-three years of independence? There can't possibly be any easy answer to this question, for the retarding factors are many. But if one were to seek the single reason most responsible, it would perhaps be, overpopulation. Excess of population drags down every achievement to a level at which it becomes ineffective and imperceptible. The story of population rise is told by the following figures :

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Decade	*Density per sq km*	*Percentage increase in population*
1921-31	90	11 0
1931-41	103	14.2
1941-51	117	13.3
1951-61	142	21.5
1961-71	177	24.8

The percentage increase of population has been only somewhat less than double between the years 1951-61 as compared to 1921-51. The density of population has also grown at an alarming rate. The registrar general of census operations said 'the population can double again by the turn of the century if the present growth rate is maintained'.

Approaches to the population problem have been erratic. Family planning entered the five-year plans with a flourish of trumpets in 1966. In the three years following, the planners called it their plan's 'kingpin.' With the emergency proclaimed on 25 June 1975 King Family Planning had a brief period of ascendency, before being rudely dethroned. This period, however, was marred by ugly incidents at some places where unwilling people were forcibly vasectomised by officers who were angling for laurels. Family planning has since become the politician's hoodoo. The Janata government, which was built on the ruins of the emergency, was so frightened of it that they demurred even at uttering its name, and euphemistically called it 'family welfare.' Money was still provided for it, in fact more and more with the years (Rs 1,010 crore in the sixth plan), and yet the achievement remained miserable, as the aforesaid figures would show. In family planning, as indeed in many other matters, India is caught in a dilemma. Awareness of a small family norm cannot come without education. With the percentage of literacy at 36.17, however, such awareness is a long way off. Even if it comes by the turn of the century (which seems doubtful), India will by then have, according

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to the registrar general's guess, about 1,278 million people (there are 639 million now). With this surging mass of humanity even existence would become difficult, to say nothing of progress. Obviously we can't wait for that to happen. What then ? The other alternative, and unfortunately, placed as we are, the only one, is to make people adopt family planning, whether they want it or not. This, of course, involves coercion, a word which makes the Indian politician shudder. But it can be softened down by calling it 'disincentives,' as indeed was its favourite name during the emergency. This is the kind of pill that perhaps Indians can take, particularly if it is sugar-coated by 'incentives.' Something like proportionate punitive taxation for transgressors, and substantial encouragement to the winners, has now become a kind of necessity. Otherwise we may for ever be going round and round the mulberry bush—no family planning till there is literacy; no literacy till there is family planning. And if God forbid there are ever 1,278 million people in India, all the politicians can do then will be to cross their fingers and join the show.

The Indian Slow-motion Movie

Having spoken of the prime ill of population, the others coming out of the Indian Pandora's box vie so much for the next place that it is difficult to accord any precedence. But let us class number two evil as inefficiency. India now produces the prestigious HMT watch which can compare with any in the world. But a watch seems to be an anachronism in India. Everybody and everything is late—the trains steaming laboriously into stations hours after schedule, the people trickling into office and basking in the winter sun, the meetings with the clock hand moving torturously onward and yet no chairman, the dinners, marriages, parties, functions, speeches; all—in which time has no meaning. To an outsider the Indian scene would appear to be a slow-motion movie.

Let us take the working in an Indian office. Letters are opened and popped into a 'dak pad'. The orders on them are all drafted by a clerk, for no officer would undergo the indignity of doing it himself. After these 'draft orders' have been signed

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the letters go to be entered in a register. They may lie there for a few days before being passed on to the 'dealing assistant', who again after taking his own time, sends it to another clerk for putting up the 'reference'. This may take months, and thereafter the letter tagged in the file, reposes on the table of the dealing assistant. After a few months he has written out a 'note' which sometimes sprawls across half a dozen pages, for it covers connected letters which have meanwhile been pouring in. Almost six months would have passed by now, with the letter still on the first lap of journey. It trudges torturously upwards through the labyrinth of officialdom—under secretary, deputy secretary, joint secretary, special or additional secretary, secretary and minister. What is worse is that after having reached the top, the files go down the same way as it came, and at each stage of its journey it again takes weeks or months to climb down each step. Quite often a file of one department is referred for 'concurrence' or opinion to another (the favourite departments being finance, law and the department of service matters). Every time the file goes to the advisory department, there is a query different from the one previously answered. Thus the see-saw moves—query, reply; query, reply; and so on.

The same is the story with most other things which are with the government, or which the government has taken over, for example the public sector, insurance, electricity, coal mines, banks, undertakings and so forth.

Taking the public sector—which now commands most of the key industries like steel, petroleum, coal, electricity, zinc, copper, lead, transportation and heavy engineering products—the total investment has nearly trebled in six years from Rs 6,237 crore in 1974 to Rs 18,225 crore in 1980. The gross profit as a percentage of net assets has remained stationary at around 7.5 per cent for the last seven years, and is only 6 per cent for manufacturing enterprises alone. For enterprises run by the state governments, it is around 4 per cent only. In comparison the private sector undertakings yielded a profit of 10 per cent. The Fertilizer Corporation of India with an investment of 822 crore rupees suffered in 1979-80 a loss of Rs 48.63 crore. The loss for Coal India (investment Rs 1,673 crore) was even

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higher—Rs 114.82 crore.[1] The private sector understakings are also not utilising their full capacity. The number of units whose capacity utilisation was 75 per cent and more, decreased from 71 in 1978-79 to 62 in 1979-80. Twenty-eight producing concerns utilised less than 50 per cent of their capacity. Forty-three concerns utilised from 50 to 65 per cent.[2]

The main reason for this poor performance is, as Raj Krishna an ex-government official of the industry ministry said, 'inefficiency'.[3] Power projects in West Bengal, for example have skyrocketted by 70 per cent to more than 150 per cent. The first unit, the Santaldih Thermal Power Project, was delayed by 49 months; the second unit by 74 months; the third by 19 months and the fourth by 40 months. The cost over-run was Rs 42.72 crore. The 150 mw sixth unit could not be financed by US aid merely due to delay in taking a decision, and subsequently in 1968 the state government altogether dropped the idea of setting up that unit, which was later on again revived in 1978.[4]

The cost of major and medium irrigation projects in the country has gone up by a staggering Rs 3,828 crore (from Rs 6,820 crore to Rs 9,676 crore) according to the statistics compiled by the ministry of irrigation government of India. Though non-availability of crucial raw materials like cement and steel were partly responsible for this, the biggest factor was delays at the state level itself.

It would be needless to repeat the story. Everywhere in India, in schools, colleges and universities (where neither the lecturers teach nor students learn), in government hospitals and dispensaries, in public services like the post and telegraphs, banks, insurance, telephones, water supply, power and so forth, inefficiency reigns supreme. The traffic constable is unconcerned about traffic, the telephone when it works at all, rings and rings and the operators at public exchanges do not respond. Even registered letters are lost in the post, and parcels reach

1 Figures from *India Today*, 1-15 April, 1981 (ed.) Aroon Purie, pp. 86-7.
2 Paripurnanand Varma, writing in *The Pioneer*, 23 January 1982.
3 *India Today*, 1-15 April, 1981 (ed.) Aroon Purie, p. 86 .
4 *Capital*, 13 November 1981 (ed.) Shankar Ray, p. 13.

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days after, pilfered on the way if they reach at all. Telegrams have lost their urgency, for they are more delayed than letters. A news item says: 'The telegram service has turned into "bullock-cart service" in Mahoba Post Office. Telegrams are being sent to their destination by ordinary post as there is no telegraphist in the local post office for the last six months'[5] Officers and ministers waste endless hours in profitless conferences and seminars. Government offices keep on multiplying without any work, and the harried people wander through endless office corridors, unheard; or heard but unredressed. In a way inefficiency is even worse than corruption. The corrupt official pockets his illegal packet and, cutting across the red tape of routine, does the work. The inefficient man may be corrupt or honest, but one thing is certain, he won't work.

Power or Position Alone Does It

The Indian constitution resolved to constitute India into a 'socialistic' republic in order to secure for all its citizens 'equality of status and opportunity'. Thirty-three years after independence, however, there exists neither a socialistic pattern of society nor equality of status and opportunity. India's people are divided into the poor who live below the subsistence level, the middle class who are engaged in an eternal struggle with prices, and the affluent rich on whom prices have no effect and for whom the only problem is what to do with their money. In terms of per capita income India is among the poorest countries. Among the 21 countries which participated in the Cancun conference India's per capita income bettered only that of Bangladesh. According to a World Bank report more than 400 million people in India do not have enough to eat. The Food and Agricultural Organisation also observed that 66 per cent of Indians are compelled to go hungry for certain periods in which food is beyond their means.[6]

5 *The Pioneer*, 24 January 1982.
6 P.S. Ramu, Economy: Venkataraman's Claim Refuted, *The Pioneer*, 30 December 1981.

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Though India is patterned on democracy, in actual fact feudalism has not quite been shaken off in the sense that there exist the two distinct classes of the privileged and the unprivileged. The former would include those who, because of their affluence or their position, can command power. These would be persons carrying authority, like MPs, ministers, legislators, top officers and big industrialists. The unprivileged or the under-privileged are the vast majority who have neither money, nor position nor power.

Perhaps such a kind of thing is not peculiar to India alone? But the difference is that while in other countries there is a certain bare minimum of attention to which everybody is entitled because of being a citizen, in India everything is from power, position and money alone. Whether it is a reservation on the train, treatment at a hospital, getting a tubelight fixed in the street at one's gate, getting a phone, water, or electric connection, or the redress of even a rightful grievance; it is only money, position and power which does it.

Netas and Sahibs[7]

The relation between politicians and bureaucrats has never been happy. It is inevitable that this should be so, for their background, aim, interests and term in office are quite different. The politician has rural connections, the bureaucrat is mainly a man of the town; the politician wants to oblige people, the bureaucrat insists on rules; the politician stays for an uncertain period, the bureaucrat for a fixed number of years. The politician is less answerable for his actions than the bureaucrat, but he can take a larger and more realistic view. The politician is secure once he has been voted in; the bureaucrat might be facing an inquiry any time. That makes him act with caution and often to evade decisions, particularly when an unscruplous politician eggs him on. But of the two, doubtless the politician has the final voice and he can harass the bureaucrat, which the bureaucrat can't do to him.

Unfortunately both the politician and bureaucrat have

7 *Neta* is the popular Indian term for a politician.

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fallen in their standards. They have become more corrupt and less devoted to work.[8] Officers have become weaklings and mere tools in the hands of politicians. They have completely lost their independence and their guts, and have picked up party alliances. Writing about politicians, Kuldip Nayar says:

'...parliament has been reduced almost to a house of hand-raisers, who have no commitment to the people who elected them or to the problems that torment them,....All that most of the members are busy with is how to placate the boss....Many MPs and MLAs themselves appear to have very little interest in what goes on in a House—The other thing that keeps many MPs occupied is how to make money....Arranging licenses, quotas and undue favours earn them very rich rewards. Many among them have industrialists and businessmen to back them —every big industrial house has at least 5 to10 MPs at its beck and call and uses them in lieu of regular payments'.[9]

The picture is not very charitable, and may be wrong about some of the politicians. But it is not without some truth. Politicians have ceased to worry about policy matters. They engage themselves in trifles like transfers, individual recommendations and so forth. What is worse, they tend to protect wrongdoers and harbour criminals. Unless political patronage is directed to right ends, and politicians grapple with the problems facing the country instead of frittering away their time on trivial matters, they are not likely to make their mark, though they may win votes. If the tenor of the bureaucrats and politicians does not improve, the outlook for administration is bleak.

Job Seekers but no Jobs

The unemployment problem has been India's Achilles heel. Despite the five-year plans and the myriad employment exchanges set up all over the country, the unemployment situation remains much the same as before. The Planning Commission

8 About corruption, see *Some Vexing Problems ante.*

9 Kuldip Nayar, Between the Lines, *The Pioneer*, 20 November 1981.

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observed about this 'though all the newly employed cannot be on a full time basis there will be greater absorption and the existing backlog of unemployment should get reduced (though not fully covered).' Each plan, however, has failed to fulfil its target for providing jobs. According to government figures there were 367.7 million non-workers in 1971 out of the total population of 548.2 million. The number of job seekers on the live registers of employment exchanges increased from 34.23 lakh on 31 December 1969 to 143.34 lakh as on 31 December 1979[10] It is apparent from this that more than half of the people are unemployed. Also, that more and more are becoming 'job seekers.'

According to Planning Commission sources the position at the end of 1981 was as follows: 'The backlog of unemployment when the plan commenced is reckoned at 12.02 million. The new additions to the labour force during the plan period is placed at 34.24 million. The total number that needs to be provided employment is thus 42.26 million. As against this staggering figure, the additional employment opportunities planned to be provided are 34.26 million standard person years, leaving a gap of 11.5 million.'[11] With the ever increasing universities and colleges churning out a steady froth of 'Inter-passed or failed' and undergraduates every year, the problem of unemployment assumes serious proportions.[12] It is of course tied up with the population explosion, but then what isn't ?

Mr Micawber's Dilemma[13]

Disraeli is supposed to have once said that there are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics. The position of

10 *India 1981*, Publications Division, Government of India, pp. 163-4.

11 UNI. Reported in *The Pioneer* 14 December 1981.

12 There were 97.7 lakh pupils in classes IX to XI/XII and 31.3 lakh in the university stage in 1947-80 as against 50.4 lakh and 14.9 lakh respectively in 1965-6.

3 'Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteeen six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six, result misery.' Charles Dickens : *David Copperfield*, chapter 12.

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Inda's economy as set out in government reports from time to time, fully illustrate this observation.

Venkataraman who was till recently India's finance minister claimed that the inflationary trend had been checked and there was a decline in the wholesale price index. The Reserve Bank however, made in clear that there had not been a halt in inflation, and the inflationary trend would continue to persist. The wholesale price curve in 1981 rose continually from 257.5 to a peak of 289.2 in mid-August and then declined in 277.1 by the year end. This fall was largely due to petering demand and seasonal off-loading.

The average weekly index for 1981 worked out to 271.3 points (provisional) as against 245.9 points in 1980 (also provisional). Thus the wholesale prices, on the average, increased by about 10 per cent.

The consumer price index for industrial workers has, in contrast, shown an upward trend between March 1979 and February 1981. It rose from 332 to 418 i.e. by 86 points. It shot up to 460 at the end of October 1981. The consumer price indices for some of the commodities ranged as follow in 1981:

Commodity	*Index in the beginning of 1981*	*Index towards the end of 1981*
(1)	(2)	(3)
Food Articles	212.8	245
Non-food Articles	229.2	238
Minerals	1107.8	1169
Fuel, Power Lights and Lubricants	356.2	437.5
Beverages, Tobacco and Tobacco Products	214.1	218 5
Textiles	210.7	225.0
Paper and Paper Products	262	289.9
Rubber and Rubber Products	254	290.8

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(1)	(2)	(3)
Leather and Leather Products	379.6	357.9
Chemicals and Chemical Products	247.2	261.9
Non-metallic Mineral Products	287.3	313.9
Basic Metals, Alloys and Metal Products	269.5	311.7
Machinery and Transport Equipment	242.1	264.9
Miscellaneous Products	233.2	241.1

(UNI-Reported. *The Pioneer*, 11 January 1982)]

It will be seen that except for one item, namely, leather and leather products, the consumer price index was up for all commodities. The government calculates dearness allowance on the twelve monthly average of the consumer price index. According to this it had to sanction three additional DA slabs in 1979-80 and three in 1980-81. During 1981-82 three DA instalments have already been sanctioned, and three more have fallen due. The chief cause of continued price rise is the increase in money supply without a corresponding increase in the national income. Increase in money supply is due to government's going again and again to the bank for credit. As D.T. Lakdawala former deputy chairman Planning Commission said, rise in money supply was due to the government resorting to bank credit partly counteracted by the use of foreign assets to meet balance of payments deficit.[14]

The value of the Indian rupee (consisting of 100 paisas) declined by about 12 per cent between October 1980 and October 1981 (25 paisas: 21.73 paisas).

India's import bill is also mounting. The cost of import of fertilizers had gone up from Rs 3,060 million in 1977-8 to Rs 9,520 million in 1980-1. The import bills on account of pesticides has similarly gone up from Rs 12 million to Rs 19.3 million, and of agricultural machinery from Rs 7.7 million to Rs 9.5 million. In contrast to this the agriculture's share of the gross domestic produce is declining. It was 41 per cent in

14 UNI. Reported in *The Pioneer*, 1 February 1982.

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1977-8, 38 in 1978-9, and 35 in 1979-80, though in view of the bumper crop of nearly 130 million tonnes harvested last year it might show an increase in 1980-1.

But there has not been any improvement on the food front, despite this bumper harvest, for in 1980 India had to import 1.5 million tonnes of wheat at a cost of Rs 236 crore. As the internatlonal wheat prices have risen, future imports will cost even more.

The sixth plan has projected an economic growth rate of 3.1 per cent. In view of the projected growth rate of population of 2.3 per cent, the growth rate of economy ought to be around 0.8 per cent. The present trends, however, indicate that even this is hard to come by.

In the world economy India has fared badly. Her share in world output fell from 2.1 per cent in 1950 to 1.3 per cent in 1975. Her share in the world industrial output was one per cent in 1950. Today it is a mere 0.8 per cent. Thirty years ago India accounted for about 2 per cent of the world's trade. Now she claims less than 1 per cent. Her per capita income has dropped from one-eighth of the world's average to one-twelfth. The only respect in which India has registered a rise is in swallowing up foreign capital. She is the largest beneficiary of the World Bank and the IMF.

What is the outlook for Indian economy in 1982 ? Crystal gazing by prominent economists predicts it will be good on some counts, not so good on others, Says Dr Malcolm Adeseshiah, MP : 'While the main feature of 1981-82 has been a turn around of the economy, the year 1982-3 would also register similar increases in overall economic growth of agriculture and industry with some further improvements in the performance of manufacturing and mining'. This is the silver lining. The cloud is inflation, price rise and shortfall in resources. 'The eight per cent annual rate of inflation till the end of last year' says Dr Malcolm 'over and above the 40 per cent rise in prices in the previous two years, has led to a high-priced high-cost economy'.[15] The prices of

15 Economy Holds No Major Promise for Next Year. PTI, *The Pioneer*, 29 January 1982.

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steel, cement, coal, power and irrigation, and sugar, have to be raised to meet the escalating costs and this would make prices rise even more. Shortfall in plan resources during 1979-80 would erode the sixth plan, and the 1982 budget will have to cut some subsidies in exports and fertilisers. To add to this the five billion dollar IMF loan would necessarily lead to a further tightening of the consumer's belt. On the whole the forecast is more a message of despair than of hope.

With prices still rising and the 1982-3 budget squeezing out another Rs 533 crore from the already over-burdened tax-payer, Indian economy is set for a low dive. Rail fares and freight rates have registered a record rise; letters have become more expensive. An official economic survey says '1981-2 may still record a 10 per cent rise in the level of prices over the previous years'.[16] With nearly 21 million people chasing non-existent jobs, the trade deficit almost doubling up during the past two years, and the public sector looking much like a pawn shop, the Indian scene is not much to be happy about.

Will Democracy Survive ?

India intrigues the west because of its being the largest democracy in the world. Having now completed thirty-three years of existence without being basically eroded, they look upon it as a kind of miracle. But will the miracle last ? That seems to be a million dollar question. The democratic experiment has stood many a crisis. In 1964 Jawaharlal Nehru's death was one, then came the downfall of Congress monopoly in 1967, the imposition of the emergency in 1975, the Janata rule in 1977 and finally Mrs Gandhi's return to power once again in 1980. Of these the most dramatic was the emergency, the exit of Mrs Gandhi and the brief abortive Janata regime. To people vexed by continuous food shortages, price rise, inflation, poverty and unemployment, it all seemed like the same horse with only a change in the rider. In fact democracy seems to have become the people's nightmare. So they keep on voting out one party and voting in another in frantic bids to secure a

16 *The Pioneer*, 25 February 1982 (PTI, UNI).

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riddance of their ills. But it all turns out to be a wild goose chase. In an opinion poll conducted by the Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB) in September 1981, almost 70 per cent of the voters believed that things were going on badly in the country.[17] Yet people appear to have retained faith in democracy, even though there was a stormy debate in October 1980 at the All-India Lawyers Conference about its suitability for India. In fact in a previous opinion poll of the IMRB held in November 1980 it turned out that 49 per cent of people were against a presidential form of government as against only 27 per cent for it.[18]

On 25 June 1975 the president of India proclaimed a state of emergency in exercise of the powers conferred on him by clause (1) of article 352 of the Indian constitution. This envisages a condition when 'grave emergency exists whereby the security of India or any part of the territory thereof is threatened, whether by war or external aggression or internal disturbances.' The reason for the emergency was given as the inciting by some persons of the armed forces to mutiny and the police to rebel. 'The actions of the few are endangering the rights of the vast majority' said the prime minister's broadcast; and 'the nation's integrity demands firm action.'[19] Clearly the presidential power was used because of 'internal disturbances' threatening 'the security of India.' The official document 'Why Emergency ?' mentioned the happenings in Gujarat early in 1974 leading to the dissolution of the state assembly; a *dharna* and indefinite fast by Morarji Desai to force the government to hold elections in Gujarat when the state was passing through unprecented drought; the 'total revolution' concept of Jayaprakash Narayan who 'toured several states to mobilise support and bring together heterogeneous parties and groups; and finally the extensive coverage by the press to accusations made by them [the leaders and parties of the opposition] against government and persons in office.'[20]

17 Reported in *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 15 October 1981, p. 20.
18 Ibid, 1-15 January 1981 (23 per cent said they were not sure).
19 *India 1976*, Publication Division, Government of India, p. (i).
20 Ibid. *Dharna* means symbolic protest.

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Thus the main grievance was the activity of the opposition like fasts, protests, countryside tours and so forth and the publicity given to these by the press.

Once the emergency was clamped, civic rights were of course eroded. There came the Maintenance of Internal Security (MISA) and the Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities (COFEPOSA) ordinances, by which people could be detained without disclosing the need for detention. A Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill made various direct taxation acts more stringent. Then there was the 20 Point Economic Programme which aimed at price control and a better deal for the middle class, the landless and the economically weaker sections. Of all these measures only the MISA could be said to have been made for the purpose mentioned in the article of the constitution authorising the emergency proclamation. The effects claimed did come, like zero rate of inflation, fall in prices, better industrial production and so on. Indeed one would expect that, when one uses a ·22 to shoot a parrot. But the emergency led to many other things as well.

While it created social security it created individual insecurity. As January 1975 changed into December, ordinance was piled on ordinance. In the beginning exultant district officers put *goondas* and bad characters behind the bars with the satisfaction of being able to detain them without their bailing out. Soon the politicians called for more. The harried bureaucrats, having exhausted all the rotten eggs, began to nab people at random. A wild orgy of repression was soon afoot, politicians and officers both running haywire with the MISA. Politicial rivals, people who had the insolence to go to courts for redress and had the temerity to criticise the government in public, were all bundled into jails without knowing why. The trains arrived on the dot and people began driving on the correct side of the road paying regard to traffic lights. Telephones suddenly came to life. Office goers were in their chairs at ten sharp. Hoarders disgorged their grain. But it was not civic sense which was oiling the wheels. It was fear. And that made all the difference. Soon people began to think they wouldn't mind an extra hour on the train or not getting a trunk call

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through, provided they could cease feeling like the Ancient Mariner :

'Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread'.[21]

The whole trouble about execution is that it is not the instrument that matters but the person who uses it. A skilful musician may produce bewitching music from a reed pipe, while for another it may be just a useless hollow tube. Aiming high, the emergency became a rod of chastisement in unscruplous hands. The politicians had already used it to wreak vengence on opponents, so a debased executive thought it would also do for personal vendettas. And once the genie of power was let loose its hunger was insatiable. No wonder when the people got a chance to express themselves, they voted out the unwelcome emergency.

Opening the session of the Congress (I) working committee at New Delhi on 8 January 1982 Mrs Gandhi said she was not afraid of the divided opposition who could never achieve lasting unity since the only thing bringing them together was the lure of office. But she was concerned about 'the inactivity of Congressmen and their disunity'. Warning them she said 'United we can face any challenge, divided we will fall'.[22] It was a timely warning, for cracks seem to have developed in the organisation. For one thing many of the brass-hats in the party have become the victims of corruption. Moral values have dropped amazingly low. The support Maharashtra's chief minister, A.R. Antulay received despite his ill deeds was bad enough. The manner of his exit, after being indicted by the High Court, was worse. In a last minute bid to stay, he got hold of more than 70 MLAs with the idea of

21 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Ancient Mariner*, Part 6.
22 *The Pioneer*, 9 January 1982.

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making them plead in his favour. Summoning a conference of Congress (I) legislators in Bombay he tried to secure a verdict of confidence from them.[23] The Antulay affair is not an isolated one. There have been many others, as for example in 1977 when the Congress party amassed Rs 6 crore for a souvenir which was never printed.

Secondly, indiscipline has permeated the Congress party. Doubtless action has been taken on many counts. Vidya Charan Shukla, the rebel union civil supplies minister was asked to resign within two hours. This was the beginning of a purge to get rid of 'dissidents', and also to put down disruptive elements like the striking employees of the Bangalore-based public sector units, the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), railways and so forth. Incompetent heads of public sector undertakings like those of Scooters India and the Electronics Trade and Technology Development Corporation (ETTDC) were sacked. Despite drastic measures, however, anti-party activities continue. Party whips and directives are blatantly defied. In some states dissidents organised public meetings against elected leaders. MPs worked for the success of rebel candidates in the elections to the legislative council of Andhra Pradesh. The majority of Congress (I) MPs have not shown any interest in parliamentary work or party organisation. Organisational elections have not been held since the party came into existence in 1978. Thirdly, traditional supporters of the party like the Harijans and the minorities, are breaking away. Brahmins, who gave unstinted support, are giving it a second thought.

It is to be seen if the rot in Congress (I) can be righted by 1985 when the next elections are due. With the opposition parties trying to come together it might be tougher in the time to come. And that leads us to the other side. With its miserable failure to keep united, the Janata government made a laughing stock of itself. There are still no signs of any likelihood of its shaping itself into an effective organisation. In the first joint rally after the Janata break up in 1979 splinter parties appeared on a common platform. They emphasised poverty, unemployment, the economic stalemate and Harijan

23 Ibid, 25 January 1982.

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atrocities, but were careful not to touch upon corruption (despite the Antulays), or law and order. Perhaps they remembered that those who live in glass houses should not throw stones. They weren't even confident about their unity move. While Chandra Shekhar said 'We must learn from our past mistakes and try for unity to once again emerge as a national alternative to the ruling party', he added as an afterthought 'unity or no unity [among the various opposition parties], the Janata party would continue to wage a struggle against the Congress (I) government'.[24] But with the erstwhile Janata 'unity, experiment still fresh in their minds, the people are not likely to be taken for a ride a second time. Unless they are convinced that the Janata really have a viable alternative' all the hosannas for unity will cut no ice with them.

Whatever the political parties may think about each other, what the Indian electorate (at least that part which votes sensibly and not in ignorance or with bribe money) would perhaps prefer is a strong ruling party, kept in check from turnning autocratic by an effective opposition.

Meanwhile the 20 point programme, which had been given a knock-out dose by the Janata government, has revived, 'to invigorate the economy and afford relief to the urban and rural poor'. It is mostly old wine in new bottles, but with the heat off, and with greater accent on agricultural and industrial production. The wary might read in it a sinister motive, for the old 20 point programme was tagged on to the emergency. 'If Winter comes', as the poet says, 'can Spring be far behind?' Indeed some people have begun feeling that many things which have happened, like the constitutional amendments, the confrontation which the judiciary and so forth, are a prelude to something drastic and momentous. Hariskesh Bahadur, an MP, said 'She (the prime minister) is now acting tough just to usher in another dose of emergency. Maybe she'll call it something else this time.'[25] Others think a change in the form of government is round the corner. Whatever it is one thing is certain. After these thirty-three years of independence

24 UNI report in *The Pioneer*, 9 January 1982.
25 Quoted in *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie 1-15 April 1981, p. 39.

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India's democracy is at the crossroads. If it continues in its present shape with its scarred economy, its inefficiency and corruption, its poverty and unemployment, its social imbalances, its tottering administration and political immorality and its laws shorn of order; it might be better to admit that it is an experiment that failed. That may shock the world, which looks on hopefully. It will also be a trust betrayed. It is up to us alone to salvage democracy, or to wreck whatever little remains of it. And the time for such an endeavour is now. As ex-President, N. Sanjiva Reddy said: 'Unless we take immediate action to arrest the disregard of moral values in public life, people's faith in our political system will be undermined with consequences too frightening to contemplate.'[26]

More Trouble at Home than Abroad

Reiterating her faith in non-alignment Mrs Gandhi is reported to have told former Australian High Commissioner, Bruce Grant, 'If India could gain economic authority, maintain military predominance in its region, and stick firmly to non-alignment, the chances of war would be less.'[27] Of these, economic authority seems a long way off with the huge import bill of oil which, as the prime minister herself observed, 'is to the modern industry what blood is to the body',[28] and with rising prices and the possibility of a cut in India's foreign aid. World Bank President A. W. Clausen made it clear during his visit to New Delhi on 22 January 1982 that 'India would not receive the usual 40 per cent of the total concessional credit of the International Development Association, soft-lending affiliate of the bank, which is currently facing a shortfull in funds'. This shortfall was quite steep, from 4.1 billion dollars to 2.6 billion. Harder terms of financing would be necessary, the World Bank President said. The US also proposes to impose

26 Republic Day broadcast, 26 January 1982.
27 UNI (*The Pioneer*, 25 January 1982).
28 Speech at the function organised for re-naming the Institute of Petroleum Exploration after the late K.D. Malaviya, 19 December 1981.

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a series of drastic changes soon on the World Bank and other international financial institutions.

The internal political situation is also none too good. The Assam tangle is not yet solved, and there seems to be a complete breakdown of democracy with President's rule reimposed in March 1982. The *bands* and spates of violence continue. No headway has been made in solving the foreigner's issue. The Mizoram situation has also worsened with the Indian government calling off negotiations with Laldenga and banning the Mizo National Front, because the Mizo leader was utilising the period 'as cover to undermine the lawfully constituted authority in Mizoram.' Laldenga insisted on the immediate dismissal of Brigadier T. Sailo's government in the union territory where the chief minister enjoyed a clear majority, paving the way for fresh elections. He also wanted the creation of a greater Mizoram which would cover not only Mizoram but also the adjacent Mizo or Kuku inhabited areas in Assam, Manipur and Tripura. In a major crackdown on the MNF, security forces and the police have so far rounded up 90 persons. Laldenga, however, claimed that he had put forward a number of proposals to solve the Mizo problem within the framework of the constitution and had favoured negotiation, but the government suddenly cracked down on the MNF. 'Both sides—the government and the MNF—and armed', he said. 'The war is on. I do not know what will happen. If one is shot at, one will try to retaliate.'[29] The situation is back to where it was, with the Mizo problem as unsolved as ever.

With her neighbours India seems to make little progress towards amity. The much talked of nowar pact offer by Pakistan has been backed up by warlike preparations on her side. Toward 1981 and there were a series of ground and air violations by her, particularly on the Kashmir and Punjab borders. A number of new canals like the Ichogil Canal and over thirty new air strips have been constructed. A Chinese defence team led by China's army chief visited important Pakistani military centres. American fighter planes and Chinese war equipment MIG-19s and T-59 tanks have been arming

29 UNI (*The Pioneer*, 25 January 1982).

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Pakistan. India has consequently had to augment its own defence measures by Mirages and the like. The talks held at the end of January 1982 did not make much headway for each side approached the matter with reservations. They got bogged down on specific points contained in the aide-mémoires of the two countries. All that emerged was an agreement to establish a joint commission to deal with bilateral relations.

With Bangladesh India has fared no better. The four day talks which began on 19 January 1982 ended on the 22nd without any agreement on the revision of the old 1972 protocol of inland water transit and trade. In fact there were serious differences between the two delegations over certain clauses of the old agreement particularly relating to the revised charges payable by India for the utilisation of Bangladesh inland river water transport facilities. The situation, remains tense on the Pakistan and Bangladesh borders, and has become more complicated because of the exploitation by big powers.

Apart from exchange of courtesies no progress has been made in the Indo-Chinese border dispute. The Beijing talks broke down because the Chinese wanted a 'comprehensive settlement' of the border problem on the basis of the 'package' which would have meant giving up to China some of the areas which belong to India. India therefore made it clear that such a 'package' was unaceptable to India. The talks were on again in May 1982 with little hope of any agreement.

The only bright spot in this dismal record is a revised convention with Sri Lanka in furtherance of the double taxation agreement existing between the two countries. This is to give relief to foreign investors so that such tax-payers do not pay tax twice for the same income. The main issue about the disabilities of Indian Tamilians in Ceylon remains unresolved.

Coming to the two big powers—USA and the Soviet, it seems that India is marking time. US interest in India is trade and business. India is a huge market for consumer goods. The IMF loan and the resumption of foodgrain imports in India have increased American interest. But America's refusal to supply fuel to the Tarapur power station despite her commitment has annoyed Delhi. By far the greatest distrust has been created by the support given to

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Pakistan. America is heavily arming a country which is openly hostile to India, knowing fully well that in the event of war Pakistan is not likely to resist the temptation to use these arms against India. America is strengthening the Diego Garcia military base which is only 500 kilometres away from India. The CIA has also been trying to interfere secretly in India's internal affairs. All this has injected animosity in Indo-US relations. Americans feel that India is more critical of them than of the Russian campaign in Afghanistan and her recognition of the Heng Samrin regime in Kampuchea has alienated the US. India's independent policy making, despite the colossal foreign aid taken by her, also seems to intrigue Washington.

The Soviet has doubtless come closer to India than in the past, and with America working against India's interest, it would be impolitic to annoy her, particularly as the Russians are sensitive. They were annoyed, for example, by the big IMF loan pocketed by India. The policy of non-alignment has steered India safety between the Scylla and Charybdis of of the displomatic sea. Had she kept too close to either US or the Soviet, she could not have wooed and won both.

Farming With Tears

According to the 1971 census India had 2,641 townsand 575,721 villages. Most of the villages had less than 500 people in them. Thus the picture which emerges is one of a countryside dotted with small sparely populated villages and just a few towns scattered all over. Obiviously the politicians's eyes are turned towards rural India where most of the people live. Despite this, however, the villages have shown little change, and the fields even less. The main reason for this is that the major ills of India, the three P's (population, poverty and prices), are accentuated in the villages. Of these population is the arch evil, for the other two follow from it. About 80 per cent of India's people still live in villages, despite an urbanisation process which has been continuing steadily right from 1921. There is thus an enormous pressure on land. To make things worse, the holdings have shrunk in size, and in states lik

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Uttar Pradesh and Bihar an average farmer owns only about a hectare of land.

A misconception which usually exists is that India has a lot of unexploited land that will suffice. It hasn't. The total area which can be utilised is about 30.49 crore hectares and the cropped area 17.23 crore hectares. This leaves us with 13.26 crore hectares. If we exclude the forests (which have already been mercilessly depleted), pastures, groves, barren land and land taken up by houses and roads etc., we have a meagre 2.25 crore hectares (including pastures and grazing grounds).[30] Clearly this is insufficient to support the mounting population which, even with birth-control, is now expected to touch 950 million by 2001 A.D.[31] The only way out is to use whatever land is already there; and that means intensive farming. With diminishing holdings this becomes more and more unlikely. The small farmer has doubtless been given a package of deals. But in practice he is a harried man, chased by the vlllage money-lender, too poor to own a tubewell or to afford modern devices of cultivation and unable to utilise the pay-back loans given by government. The *mahajan* (as the village Shylock is often called), can wait with some persuasion. The government can't. Intensive farming is, for the average village cultivator, a distant dream.

Some states (like Uttar Pradesh) have tried consolidation of holdings. Apart from the human frailties involved in its implementation, like corruption, the maze of litigation and so forth, it is only a temporary cure. Soon the consolidated fields (*chaks*, as they call them) get as small as they were, by being partitioned between the innumerable progency of an Indian family. No one dare introduce a law of primogeniture for it would be highly unpopular. Even if it was done, it would hardly help, for those who do not inherit have nothing else to fall back upon. And that leads us to India's cottage industries.

Cottage industry in India is not the kind which exists in

30 Figures from *India 1981*, Publications Division, Government of India, p. 199 Table 14.1 (forest land : 6.71, Roads buildings etc : 1.76, barren land : 2.14, groves etc : 0.4; adding up to 11.01 crore hectares).

31 According to P. Padmanabha, registrar general census operations 1981.

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developed countries, as for example in Japan, where small mechanical parts (which are later assembled) are all made in village homes. India's cottage industry is mainly handlooms and handicrafts. These employ together only about 1.18 crore people, when there are more than 29 crore idle in the villages, not to speak of those who are more and more being thrown off the land.[32] Small scale cottage industries, which are in a way the answer to India's rural poverty, are too ineffective to give any relief. A flood of people keep migrating from villages only to find that the towns have little use for them. The registers of employment exchanges keep on swelling, but there are no jobs.

The picture is, fortunately, not so grim everywhere. While growth in foodgrain production between 1960-1 and 1978-9 increased only 1.19 per cent per year in Orissa, it was 8.01 per cent in Punjab. The annual growth rate for total agricultural production for Punjab during the period 1952-3 to 1969-70 was 6.6 per cent as against 0.7 per cent for Bihar[33]. If Punjab and Haryana (which was formed from it in 1966) can do it, so can others. More irrigation (three-quarters of Punjab's land is irrigated as against the Indian average of less than a quarter), better co-operative credit and advisory service, fewer absentee landlords, government sponsored marketing and land consolidation, has enabled Punjab to march ahead in agriculture. If these things are improved, others can follow suit.

Even if somehow there is food for India's millions today, tomorrow may not be so hopeful because of many factors. Both population and the rate of population growth have increased. Of the total cropped area of 17.50 crore hectares only 5.26 crore were irrigated by 1978-9 (less than a third). Even in assured irrigation there are snags. Canals run erratically, and no one really knows when there will be water in them. Power failures, and short supply of electricity, combined with occasional diesel famines, keep on harassing the cultivator. Then there are India's, vanishing forests, now spread over about

32 Figures are from *India 1981*, Publications Division, Government of India, p. 163 and pp. 329-30.

33 Dr M.S. Swaminathan, member Planning Commission, seventeenth Sri Ram Memorial lecture, Our Agricultural Future.

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746 lakh hectares. King Canutelike the government keeps on ordering them to grow. But they get the axe instead. The 'guidelines' for forest preservation, which didn't work, have now been injected for strength by the centre's Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980 which sets up an advisory committee and makes government of India's approval imperative for any hocus pocus with reserved forests. But will that work any better ? During the guideline period about 45 lakh hectares of land was deforested. With the new Act the process can be delayed but hardly halted; for when it is a choice between trees and men, obviously the men will have preference. As everything else, the preservation of forests too is tied up with population. Unless the population tide is checked it will carry the forests also with it.

Apart from checking soil erosion, forests are good foreign exchange earners for they yield a number of valuable products like essential oils, herbs, lac, resins, fatty oils and fats, gums, tanning materials, dyes, animal products, bamboo, and so forth. Nearer home they provide the much needed fuel-wood. With all the pilfering, it has been difficult to feed industrial furnaces. Fuel wood production was only 11 million cubic metres in 1975-6 while according to the National Commission on Agriculture about 184 million cubic metres of wood were burnt as fuel in 1980.[34] An alternative to wood as fuel is sorely needed. The biogas plant which produces gas for both lighting and cooking is one; and has the advantage that the dung can be used as fertiliser afterwards. At the moment biogas is not a feasible alternative because it is beyond the average villager's pocket. At least three cows or bullocks are needed to yield enough dung for even a small plant.[35] Besides orthodox country folk might not reconcile themselves to cooking meals with a dung product.

Indian villages are gradually modernising themselves the same way as the cities. Radio, TV, electricity, roads, schools, dispensaries more and more make their appearance, as in a humbler way tea and cosmetics. It is a good sign, for it means

34 *Economist* (London) 28 March 1981, Treadmill or Take-off ? In 1975 the production of fuelwood was 17 million cubic metres.

35 Ibid.

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progress, but it also needs money. The present day cultivator rightly wishes to move on commercial lines. After producing for his own needs, he aims at making a profit on the surplus. More and more, cultivators are inclining towards cash crops, like sugarcane or potato, which they can dump into a sugar mill collecting centre or a cold-storage, and pocket the money. In affluent areas like west Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab, which abound in these facilities, wheat patches keep growing less and less. This might pose a problem in the coming years.

Another remarkable feature is that socialisation is as far a cry in Indian villages as in Indian towns. A constitutional directive is 'to secure the distribution of ownership and control of the material resources of the community to subserve the common good and to ensure that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to common detriment'. In the villages, as in the cities, however, one finds either the filthy rich or filthy poor. On the one hand there are the mammoth farmers with land even more than 300 or 500 acres (subtle and politically protected dodgers of the ceiling laws); and on the other the miserable 'hectare' cultivator. The former own perhaps a dozen or two dozen tubewells, modern harvesting and threshing machines, tractors and so on; the hectare man has to be content with a pair of bullocks, a plough and an ordinary well—one with revolving buckets if he is lucky. Ironically it is the big farmer, who, with more 'pull,' is able to bag all the government benefits. Socialisation is certainly a long way off.

The cultivator now wants a fair price for what he produces and sells. And his idea of what price is fair may not be what the government's is. In lean years of drought or monsoon failure, the cultivator fails to get compensated for higher production costs because government is able to offset the shortage from built up stocks. In productive years he can't get the price he wants because the law of supply and demand makes grain cheap. So he suffers both ways. No wonder the Indian farmer (except in Punjab) never sells more than 15 per cent of his surplus wheat to government at the support price.

Future India may present a curious pattern of interaction between village and urban life. More and more village people

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are seeking the better facilities of city living, like schools, hospitals, security and so forth. The cities, however, are overfull themselves. It makes the municipal authorities scratch their heads when, because of political pressure, they are forced to extend municipal boundaries to take in more. India's ever sprawling towns might soon become as amenity-less as its villages. That would surely be a backward step in progress. Meanwhile rural India presents a coufused picture of uneven development. One may tumble across a small spot fostered with loving care by political patronage where the lights blink and potable water comes from pipes, with tarred roads, a market and even a government, factory—an oasis in the desert. In Jagdishpur, for example, which is a small township in the Amethi parliamentary constituency which returned Rajiv Gandhi, a watch manufacturing unit is being set up under the public sector. Elsewhere village India remains dotted over by tiny fields surrounding small clusters of mud huts, unchangeable and unchanged as the Sphinx.

Wheels That Run Slow

At the turn of the century the number of cities having a population of over a lakh are expected to rise from 185 to 300. But will they be able to provide on asylum for the rural migrants ? If the past can be a pointer, the answer is, no. Factory employment increased by 3 per cent a year from 1950 to 1965, double the growth of the labour force. Between 1965 and 1975, however, the labour force grew by 1.6 per cent a year but industrial employment only by 1.9 per cent.[36] Today only 0.22 million of India's 684 million people work in factories, a poor utilisation of man power.[37] This is the outcome of India's industries being capital instead of labour oriented. The rapid place at which of industries has proceeded, and heavy investments in the public nationalisation sector, are contributory factors. As a survey notes: 'India's nationalised industries today employ 4 million

36 *Economist* (London), 28 March 1931, India, Treadmill or Take-off ?

37 *India 1981*, Publications Division, Government of India, p. 164, table 11.7.

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people, hold three-quarters of the country's industrial assets, contribute only one-third of industrial output and make a thumping loss.'[38]

Another retarding factor for industry has been, with some exceptions, the poor quality of Indian goods. A belief has existed that domestic needs should first be fulfilled and thereafter attention given to exports. The principle 'Indian goods for Indian consumption' while drying up the export market, does no good to India itself. With the upset economy and downright proverty existing in India, her manufactured goods can hardly be expected to command a good Indian market.

Indian exports are only picking up a little lately, in 1981, as the following table will show:

In crores of rupee

	Apr-Oct 1980	*Apr-Oct 1981*	*Apr-Sep 1980*	*Apr-Sep 1981*
Value of Export	3,472	3,960	2,797	3,385
Trade Deficit	3,144	2,928		
Net Growth Rate		14 per cent		Over 20 per cent

Tobacco, cashew-nuts, processed food, shellac, soyabean extract, garments, woollen products, processed mica, plastic and linoleum did particularly well. Some articles however witnessed a decline, as for example coffee, cardamom, spices, handpicked special groundnuts, chrome ore and man made textiles. This has been a temporary revival. But India has been giving apron-string protection to her industries, and has preferred to keep them in blissful isolation. While other countries like Brazil and Japan acquired industrial knowhow by inviting foreign firms to manufacture by collaboration, Indian industry refused to learn for a long time. It is only lately that this omission has been partly made good by granting between 1980 and June 1981 twelve industrial licences to Indian subsidiaries of foreign companies such as General Electric Company of India, Ingersoll-

38 *Economist* (London), 28 March 1981, India, Treadmill or Take-off ?

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Rand (India) Limited, Indian Foils Limited and Sandvik Asia Limited.

Indian production costs of cement and of some types of steel are the lowest in the world, yet it imports these instead of being able to sell them profitably abroad. Why are there so few of these essential articles and others like them ? The causes form a chain of inter-related failures. Thermal power stations cannot generate enough electricity because there is no coal. There is no coal because there are no waggons to bring it. The waggon factories are not able to turn out more waggons because of frequent power shortages. So there it is again the familiar merry-go-round for India. The story does not end there. It carries on to lack of all-weather roads, high petrol and diesel costs and their scarcity, arbitrary and crippling controls like the Restrictive Trade Practices Act (MRTP, licencing, irrational taxation, bad planning, corruption inefficiency and delays, thefts and pilferage and political exploitation, not to speak of the poor quality of what finally comes out for the market.

Take for instance power generation. Coal-fired (thermal) stations provide 60 per cent of India's electricity, but their capacity utilisation is about a fifth lower than that of hydro plants.[39] The maintenance is poor and those who work the stations lack practical experience. Sub-standard coal is supplied to the power stations. The union minister for industry, steel and mines, N.D. Tewari says '...the quality of coal, particularly the ash content, continues to cause anxiety.'[40] Not only is the coal bad, there is less of it than needed. Coal supply was so poor in 1981 that in October a large number of trains (42 in all) had to be cancelled by the North and North-eastern Railways. These included some goods trains also. In the past two years the output has been almost 12 per cent less than the estimated demand mainly because of under-mining of coal due to power cuts and labour disputes. What is worse is that even this low quality and meagre coal supply often does not reach the thermal stations due to non-availability of railway waggons. The electricity boards of states themselves are ill-managed. Hotbeds of

39 *Economist* (London), 28 March 1981, India Treadmill or Take-off?
40 Writing in *The Pioneer*, Industrial Outlook for 1982.

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politics, they are plagued with strikes, inefficiency and unconcernedness. As it is the electricity charge are low, and no government dare increase them in the rural areas where more and more electricity keeps going (in 1960 agriculture took 5 per cent of all electricity, now it is 15). Rural electrifiction—the present day fad of all politicians because it fetches votes—is expensive, because it means longer transmission and distribution lines and therefore more line losses. This, added to the pilferage, accounts for 20 per cent of electricity which is not paid for yet has to be generated.

A great hurdle in India's industrial progress is transport. One can understand it only when he sees the merciless way goods loaded and unloaded from railway waggons are thrown about, the frantic chase by the recipient to find out what is holding them up (they arrive finally when he has given up, all tagged with a heavy demurrage slip), and horrified disbelief when he sees the condition in which the goods have reached him. No wonder, except for the government public sector, enmeshed by rules of audit etc., the majority of businessmen use the roads. Road transport, however, is by no means a boon. It is only, what one might call, the lesser evil. The old fashioned Indian truck moves fast enough but arrives as though it had gone at the speed of a cycle. The reason is the innumerable halts on the way, repairing punctures, changing wheels, queuing up for the interminable octroi barriers, stopping at railway crossings and moving warily in groups at night for fear of hold-ups. Indian trucks use about 30 per cent more fuel then those of most other Asian countries. This adds heavily to transport costs. And that leads us to the roads. Against a planned target of 32,000 miles of 'national' highways, India has 18,500 miles today.[41] The name is deceptive for 37 per cent of their length is still single lane. A large portion of the highway is bumpy and does not permit speeds more than 40-50 kilometres. While towns are connected by some kind of road the same can't be said of the villages. More than half of them have no road links and only 30 per cent have all weather roads. To connect every

41 *Economist* (London) 28 March 1981, The figure given in India 1981 (Publication Division) is 30, 885 kilometres.

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village with some kind of a road is likely to cost about $14 billion (at 1978 prices).[42]

The infrastructure of India's industry is like a foundation filled partly with hard bricks and partly with sand. No one will deny that it is good in parts. But you can't really build upon it unless all of it is reasonably strong. As if coal, cement, steel, electricity and transport were not enough, there is oil to add to India's troubles. In 1979 India produced 12,841,000 tonnes of crude, and imported 15,467,000 tonnes, along with 4 mlllion tonnes of refined products from abroad, to fulfil her needs. In 1980 import requirements were about 16 million tonnes of crude and 4.5 million tonnes of refined products. At present 65 per cent of the oil required has to be imported, despite the oil finds in the Bombay High offshore field B-57 and offshore Cauvery Basin. The huge oil imports burn up a lot of India's foreign exchange and make her dependent on loans. The steep rise in oil prices since October 1973 (prices have trebled) has made things worse by skyrocketting petrol rates. Tapping indigenous oil resources seems to be the Hobson's choice for India. With its meagre 50 kg per capita oil consumption, lower than most countries (including Pakistan), a further squeeze is out of the question. Oil exploration, however, progresses at the same leisurely pace as everything else. The latest find in the offshore Krishna-Godavari Basin did not trigger off much zest in the oil pundits, despite the fact that Hong Kong's *Petroleum News* categorised the Basin as 'the largest anywhere in the world'.

India's minister for industry, steel and mines, feels that 'the industrial outlook for 1982 appears to be bright' because of stability of leadership, improvement in the performance of the infrastructure, better investment climate and liquidity situation, success in combating inflation, greater understanding between investors and the government, and concentration in industrially developing backward areas. He promises that 'the policies of the government are likely to have much more pronounced acceleration effect from 1982-3 onwards'.[43] But Government

42 *Economist* (London), 28 March 1981, India Treadmill or Take-off?
43 N.D. Tewari, Industrial Outlook for 1982 (*The Pioneer*).

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has been pushing the pedal hard enough duridg the years after independence, all the time mistaking the brake for the accelerator. By casting more and more industries into the nationalisation prison house and putting on them the fetters of controls and licenses, it has made them helpless captives. The 'pronounced acceleration effect' is exactly what the industrialists don't want. If instead, the government deaccelerat ed a little they would be happier. Hoarding, profiteering, black markets and black money of course need government attention, if you can nab the right man—between 1965-6 to 1974-5 Rs 840 crore of black money was *generated* as a result of controls on just six items viz. urea, cement, paper, automobile tyres, vanaspati and steel![44] Industry breathes better in a free climate.

It is really doubtful if the government claim is borne out, except for a recent improvement in export trade. Power and transport do not seem to be functioning 'better'. Price rise and inflation are on a gala spree. The backward areas do not seem to march out. Entrepreneurs keep knocking around unresponsive government offices for getting their schemes okayed and for loans. If they do not give up, and are able to somehow go into production, they have to get through the barrage of inspectors each holding out his palm to be greased, power cuts, quotas, shortage of raw materials, labour troubles, government cheques for work done which cannot enter his pocket without a 'commission' and finally the politician who wants a something for himself as well as for his party.

Contrary to the union industry minister's assertion, the growth rate of industrial production, according to the government's own figures, was 3.8 per cent in 1980-1 as against 5.8 per cent in 1979-80. Many industries of significance dropped production, as for example wood and cork (by 29.6 per cent), metal products (8.5 per cent) and petroleum and coal (by 6.6 per cent). Others like electrical goods, paper, rubber products, machinery, and food manufactures showed small rises. Only leather and beverages fared reasonably well. And curiously just those things which the industries minister claims improved, went wrong. The ministry's note listed the failures

44 *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie.

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as 'infrastructural constraints of power, coal, raw materials and capacity and the industrial relations problem'.[45]

Atoms for Peace[46]

The Atomic Energy Commission, set up in August 1948, manages all the atomic energy activities in India through the department of atomic energy (started in August 1954). The Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) at Trombay near Bombay carries on all research and development work with four research reactors, the Apsara, Cirus, Zerlina and Purnima. The R-5, a 100 mw thermal research reactor is under construction.

India's object in developing atomic and nuclear power is to serve industry, agriculture and medicine, not, as in the developing countries, for war. Radioisotopes are being used for various purposes like treatment of diseases, industrial radiography and so forth. Disinfecting foodgrains and developing disease resisting mutants of rice, wheat etc., sterilising medical products and preserving perishable food, are some of the uses to which radiations are being put to.

A seismic station near Bangalore detects and identifies underground nucleur explosions. A high altitude research centre has been set up at Gulmarg, and a nucleur research station at Srinagar.

The Bhabha Research Centre carries out research and development work in various fields like metallurgy, electronics, agriculture, biology and so forth. It also finds out the extent to which workers in institutions using radiation sources are exposed to such radiation. It trains researchers and scientists, some coming from other developing countries as well.

The department of atomic energy has a number of units spead over the country doing a variety of research work. The Atomic Minerals Division at Hyderabad works on rare metals such as uranium, thorium, beryllium and columbium-tantalum.

45 *India Today* (ed.) Aroon Purie, 15 October 1981, p. 129.
46 Factual information is as in *India 1981*, Publications Division, pp. 73-5.

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The Indian Rare Earths Limited extract rare earth, minerals and thorium from Orissa and from the beaches of South India. The Uranium Corporation of India Limited mines and concenrates uranium at Jaduguda (Bihar). The Nuclear Fuel Complex Hyderabad fabricates fuel elements for power reactors, and provides material for electronic articles. The Electronics Corporation Limited of Hyderabad manufactures, among other things, computers and TV sets.

With the commission of the 420 mwe Tarapur Atomic Power Station in Maharashtra in 1969, atomic energy was harnessed for the first time to power generation. This, and the 440 mw Rajasthan Atomic Power Station at Kota, are already running. Two more are coming up at Narora in Uttar Pradesh and Kalpakkam in Tamil Nadu.

For the production of heavy water used as moderator in reactors there are five plants at Nangal, Vadodara, Kota, Talcher and Tuticorin. A fast breeder test reactor is under construction at Kalpakkam.

On 18 May 1974 India successfully conducted its first underground nuclear explosion at Pokhran in Rajasthan.

Reaching For the Sky[47]

For a country not yet firm on on its feet, reaching for the sky sounds a little too soon; but curiously enough India has managed the skies much better than its economy. The success in its space programme has bracketed it with big powers such as America and Russia. On 20 November 1981 Bhaskara II, India's second earth observation satellite zoomed into space from Moscow's Volgograd cosmodrome. This set the country in the complex second phase of its space programme.

The launch has a long history of space research behind it. It all began about six and a half years back with the launching on 19 April 1975 of the Aryabhata (named after the famous Indian astronomer and mathematician) from a Soviet cosmodrome

47 This, and the previous section (Atoms for Peace) give the developments briefly. See also chapter on Science and Technology in the author's subsequent volume (Vol. 3. part 3) of *A History of Indian Civilisation*, published by Ess Ess Publications.

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Soviet inter-cosmos rocket. This was followed by Bhaskara I (7 June 1979) designed and built by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Weighing 44 kg, Bhaskara I contained sophisticated instruments for carrying out remote sensing experiments over India, using TV cameras and microwave radiometers. In 1981 India placed three satellities into orbit. The first, the Rohini (RS-D-I) was for purely scientific purposes. It was an improvement on the Rohini 1 (RS-I) launched on 18 July 1980 from an indigenously built launch vehicle SLV-3 from Sriharikotta Range. After that there was the country's first communication satellite APPLE and the one before Bhaskara II was the Satellite for Earth Observation (SEOII) which, like Bhaskara, used remote sensing techniques.

Bhaskara II is successor to Bhaskara I which was launched for earth observation (and therefore also known as SEO I). Bhaskara II designers have profited by the Bhaskara I experiment. A fortnight after its launch Bhaskara I's microwave radiometer system (SAMIR) was switched on automatically and beamed back a series of significant pictures of the Indian Ocean. But the camera eyes of Bhaskara I did not function for a year because of a trapped air bubble in the high voltage supply of its TV system. Later it was able to relay pictures of 90,000 square kilometres of the Bay of Bengal over which it twice passed.

The scientists who fashioned Bhaskara II (named, as the first Bhaskara, after the renowned 18 century astronomer), took care to avoid these faults, so that it was all success. The main mission of the indigenously fabricated Bhaskara II satellite was to map oil, gas and coal reserves through its television eyes. Like Bhaskara I it carried a TV camera for infrared and visible scanning of the land and a radio transmitter operating at three frequencies for oceanographic studies.

India's space programme dates back to 1961 when an Indian National Committee for Space Researh (INCOSPAR) was set up under the chairmanship of Dr Vikram A. Sarabhai. Next year the Vikram Sarabha Space Centre (VSSC) was established, and in 1963 the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS) was set up there. By 1978 over 500 sounding rockets had been launched from Thumba, the first India made one

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being the Rohini RH-75 (20 November 1967). In 1968 the Space Applications Centre (SAC) was established at Ahmedabad. Its significant achievement was the Ariane Passenger Payload Experiment (APPLE) project. The India Space Commission was set up in 1972. Its most important wing was the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) at Bangalore. About this time also two new major centres were set up. The Shar on Sriharikotta Island on the east coast of Andbra Pradesh was to become India's principal rocket and satellite launching station. The other one was the Indian Satellite Centre (ISAC) at Bangalore. In 1974-5 was conducted the Agricultural Resources Inventory and Survey Experiment (ARISE) to assess crop and land-use patterns by remote sensing techniques. In 1975-6 was carried out the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) involving direct broadcast of TV programmes via the NASA satellite ATS-6. The Satellite Tracking and Ranging Station (STARS) was inaugurated on 23 January 1977 at Kavalur in Tamil Nadu. Another landmark was the Satellite Telecommunications Experiments Project (STEP) 1977-9. This was made possible by an agreement between ISRO and Symphonie, whereby the Franco-German Symphonie satellite could be used for the experiment. Project STEP was a joint venture of the ISRO and Telegraphs Department.

Thus a lot of spade work had been done before India launched her satellites beginning with Aryabhata (1975) right up to the Bhaskara II launch in November 1981.

Steps are being taken to put into operation an Indian Remote Sensing Satellite (IRS). The system will meet Indian resources management requirements, with emphasis on agriculture, water management, forestry, certain aspects of mineral geology and petroleum exploration. It is proposed to build the satellite indigenously based on technology developed and acquired through aircraft sensors, Bhaskara payloads and other follow up systems. Eventually the aim is to replace the foreign procured INSAT spacecraft with indigenously designed,

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developed tested and qualified operation satellites with high reliability and long life.[48]

The main objectives of India's space projects are as follows:

(a) Intensification of research and development in resources survey and management, communications, meteorology and geodesy

(b) Developing an Indian Remote Sensing (IRS) satellite and indigenously made INSAT spacecraft.

(c) Building Indian launch vehicles to launch heavy satellites (600 kg and more) on polar sun-synchronous missions from Indian ranges. Also acquiring launch capability for geosynchronous missions (communications, meteorology etc.) and other such space applications.

(d) Setting up space-borne and mobile tracking stations and establishment of new launch ranges.

(e) Strengthening ISRO's linkages with academic and research institutions in the country for mutual benefit.

(f) Improvement and utilisation of the ISRO telementry tracking and telecommand network (ISTRAC) and national test and launching ranges.

(g) Evolution of appropriate machinery for transfer and commercialisation of technologies developed in space programme and promotion of their applications in various sectors.[49]

Pakistan has also formulated a four-phase 10 year long national space programme, including launch of a satellite within five to six years. Pakistan's Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) are negotiating with NASA (American National Aeronautics and Space Agency) for setting up a ground receiving station at Islamabad. This will receive pictures and other information direct from the US Landsat series of earth resources satellite. But the difference in Pakistan's programme is that, as Salim Mehmud, Chairman of SUPARCO told engineering students, Pakistan's satellites are, apart from

48 UNI (*The Pioneer* 2 October 1981).
49 UNI (*The Pioneer*, 21 November 1981).

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research, for 'taking pictures of military installations, army movements, and acting as control command and communication bases'. Thus they could serve military purposes also.

India's space programme has been perhaps her most glorious achievement. Its unique feature is that it is entirely for peace. That gives it a superiority of purpose over space programmes elsewhere, for, as the poet says :

> 'Peace hath her victories
> No less renowned than war'.[50]

Will India Make It?

As usual, there are the optimists and the pessimists. Some believe in a glorious future for India when it will become once more the envy of the world. Others think it is fast hurtling down a precipice, and the smash is soon. The truth seems to be midway. It can't be denied that India has not used its three decades and more, of freedom, to the best advantage. Other Asian countries have made it. Not India. With its mud-housed thirsty villages and slum-filled jumbled cities, the India of today amazes an outsider. It is a far cry from what Alexander the Great was told about India : 'The country beyond the Hyphasis is rich and productive; the people are good farmers and fine soldiers and live under an orderly and efficient social system'.[51]

India is a land of contrasts. In some places it seems as though progress has been marking time for a hundred years, and at others that it has taken the stride which many developed countries have not yet taken. It has launched space satellites, yet in its thousands of villages crudely fashioned bullock-carts crawl painfully along deeply rutted road. Fabulous dinners are hosted in five star hotels, while millions starve. Within a stone's throw of posh colonies you may find stinking slums. Sprawling farms jostle with tiny bits of land. On the on-

50 John Milton, *To Cromwell.*

51 *Arrian's Life of Alexander the Great*, trans. Aubrey de Selincourt, Penguin Classics, London. 1958, p. 187.

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hand there is fathomless wealth, on the other inconceivable poverty. The only thing which seems to be uniform is that wherever one goes there are people. Packed like biscuits on buses and trains, rubbing shoulders on rickshaw-infested roads, queuing up in endless queues at cinemas, booking windows and at ration shops, it is people, people everywhere. Maybe miles away from this madding crowd, someone peeping into India's future may feel that the population explosion makes no difference. The *Economist*, London, for example, says 'The land can feed India's people—whether they are 670 million-strong as now or twice as many 100 years hence'.[52] That might be possible with a dozen ifs. '*If* irrigation spreads as fast as the people, *if* holdings do not diminish, *if* there is enough diesel and electricity, *if* people work, *if* bureaucrats and politicians are honest and upright, and so on. But if all this was likely, thirty years is a lot of time for it to have happened. We have in fact started importing grain in a large way again In 1981 1.5 million tonnes of American wheat were imported, and another 2.5 million tonnes in 1982. Clearly food is, and will remain, an ace problem. Even if by an agrarian miracle India's fields can cough up food for its hungry millions, what about those who will still be knocking about for jobs ?

There are almost three million of these in the villages who do no work at all, and another half-a-million agricultural labourers (a steadily mounting lot because more and more village families are working on fields themselves). At the moment there would be about 25 per cent of people whom the fields of India's villages can't support.[53] And as the pressure on land and the population increase, these persons will be a surging mass of misery. How can we provide alternative work for these 280 million people (likely to go up to 400 or 500 million in another generation) ? About 137 million people (a fifth of India's 684m) already live in 2,641 jam-packed towns. If we add 280 m to these it would seem that a worker's procession was perpetually passing on the streets. Even if the cities are able to suck in this hungry jobless mass of humanity most of them will not

52 *Economist* (London) 20 March 1981, India, Treadmill or Take-off ?
53 Ibid.

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be able to manage to meal a day, leave alone a house and other basic needs.

Even on paper this sounds bad enough; translated into life it would be too terrible to contemplate. There is no easy way out of the muddle, save money, economy and hard work. India is the world's fifteenth poorest country, yet it can afford to squander. In the foreign air-hikes of politicians the furnishing of VIP residences and so forth, it is as reckless as a millionaire on a binge. This spending spree needs a halt. But even if somehow this is done, it alone could not bridge the gap. Money will still have to be raised, and the easiest way is taxation. Unfortunately Indian administrators and politicians want to do things the easy way. Instead of concentrating on adding to the national wealth by industry, better farming, exploitation of natural resources etc., they keep pulling at the already tight taxpayer's belt. Taxation follows a funy pattern. It affects the middle class man most. He sells his car because he can no longer afford the petrol, cuts out the cheese and fruits, which have passed beyond his budget, and is perpetually worrying about the telephone and the electric bills for they seem to follow the petrol pattern. More and more people of the middle class keep descending into the Hades of poverty. Another thing about Indian taxation is that it is a town bird. Taxing the rural sector makes politicians shudder. One can't blame them really, for their war horse is the vote, and they would much rather annoy 20 per cent of the people than 80. But it terribly narrows down taxation's scope. The only honeymoon with agrarian taxation was the Agricultural Income Tax (AIT) and that turned out a very brief one. Land rent or revenue is so nominal that it can hardly be called a tax. That goes for irrigation rates too. No government would seriously try to charge higher rates for electricity from rural consumers despite the power reaching them at higher costs. Unless taxation becomes Janus-faced it could hardly bridge the resources gap even if the urban taxpayer is squeezed into oblivion. It is time for taxation to take a countryside stroll. The political bosses might loose their government cars if it does, but they should realise that it is better to survive car-less than to perish. Having got the money, economy automatically rights

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itself. If the horses of money supply and national wealth march neck to neck, the state coach goes smoothly.

That brings us to the hard work. Hard work is a queer thing. Even a donkey works hard, but he only carries loads. To a large extent this is what is happening to Indian administration. Its secretaries and ministers and all the brass hat are hard working. They come home tired, having attended mammoth meeting, having signed hundreds of letters and scrawled on scores of files. Hard work no doubt; but is it useful work ? Any business executive could tell you it isn't *He* never calls a meeting unless it is absolutely necessary and whatever letters *he* signs are put to good use. The statements he calls for are not just branded with a 'seen file' inscription but carefully scrutinised to evaluate the work of those beneath him. Much of what is done in Indian government offices is just passing on the buck.

Then there is in almost all of India's government offices what one might call the negative attitude. Everyone is furiously busy in trying to find ways for *not* doing a thing. Confronted with a problem, the first reaction of most people handling it is 'It can't be done'. Having decided that already, all that remains to do is to fish out some rule or order which is against it. That's not difficult at all, for most rules are framed to say 'no' rather than 'yes', and even if one of them says 'yes' it says it so vaguely that it can easily be interpreted as 'no'.

There is the question of priorities. The Indian see-saw of priorities keeps going up and down. Up goes agriculture, down goes industry. Then up industry, down agriculture. At times (as during the emergency) the family planning fever grips the nation. Thereafter one doesn't whisper a word about it. When one speaks about priorities in India he means 'politics'. It is that which gives a thing priority, not the importance. Whether it is for the nation or for an MP's constituency, it is politics that determines what should be done, not the national good or the local needs.

Indian administration has its drones and queenbees—the drones predominating. Work is apportioned in unequal doses. Some have as much as to keep them busy the whole day, and more. Others have not even a couple of hours's work. Worse

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still is the inclination not to work; to leave everything for tomorrow, and to avoid taking decisions. All this makes the Indian administrative machinery ponderously slow-moving. Jawaharlal Nehru used to say *aram haram hai* (idleness is damnation). The slogan for today might well be *aram hi aram hai* (nothing save idleness). The outcome, as could be expected, is inefficiency gone wild. Poison-gas-like, it pervades every corner of the Indian scene—in offices, factories, banks, hospitals, colleges and universities, public works, local bodies and in essential services like railways, telephones, post and telegraph, water supply, electricity and so forth. On the one hand inefficiency causes human suffering, as for example the retired man who is without his pension for years or someone whom the doctor has not properly handled at a government hospital. On the other hand inefficiency keeps on squandering India's hard-earned money by delays in projects and in their execution. There is a lot of poverty and a lot of corruption in India. But is is not these which are likely to be the grave diggers. The culprit is inefficiency.

India's administrative structure is about the same as the British left it. The problem through these years has been to harness this 30 years old machine to the new tasks of independence. In a way this is like repairing an aeroplane with a screwdriver. But even this machinery has deteriorated during the years. The result is that India's administrative system is both outmoded as well as out of gear, and entirely unsuited to the strenuous tasks of development.

No one speaks about India's shortcomings more than Indians themselves. Except for the brief period of the emergency, one keeps hearing what's wrong with India on Indian roads, buses, trains and wherever two Indians meet. Loudspeakers and mikes blare it all out in public—the mounting prices, the corruption, the lethargy, the farmers's troubles, the Harijans's problems, law and order etc. After having castigated, the prophets of gloom depart to castigate still more. But no one tries to do anything about it, which is surprising; for action is enjoined by India's philosophy. The *Gita* says: *lokasangraham evapi sanpashyan kartum arhasi*: 'Having an eye to the

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maintenance of the world order too, you should take toaction'.[54] So too the Upanishad: *kurvanneveha karmani jijiveshet chatam samah*: 'Performing verily work in this world one should desire to live a hundred years'.[55] All this should inspire Indians to take to work as ducks take to water. But no, they do not move. Not quite, for there is a lot of spiritual movement in India. There are *kirtans* and *kathas* for Hindus and the muezzin's calls for Muslims—all alas through India's favourite announcing system, a full throated loudspeaker.[56] Men walking in the streets who can just manage a meal a day, find comfort in thinking that it is all God's will. In a way it is good, for it makes poverty a divine gift, and so, easy to bear. At the same time resignation takes away the impetus from self improvement. It might be better for India's progress if people would be a little less satisfied with what they see around them. Then they might try to make things better. And that would trigger off God's enthusiasm too; for He helps those more who help themselves.

India's statecraft wizard of the 4th century B.C., Kautilya, had four ways of managing the show. *Sama*, meaning 'conciliation' was the gentle way; *dama*, giving of gifts or money, the way of temptation. *Danda*, or punishment, was the way of chastisement; and *bheda*, or creating difference, the way of wile. Of these, obviously *dama* and *bheda* are for conquerors. The British used them widely, bribing their way into forts they could not storm, pitching Muslim against Hindu, and creating mutual mistrust between native rulers. The other two—*sama* and *danda* remain for use in free countries. India has been using the former, except for the months of 'emergency' when *danda* took over. In the period of this *danda* supremacy, it seemed a different India was born. It was like

54 *Bhagavad Gita*, 3:20 (Gita Press, Gorakhpur).

55 *Ishvasyopanishad* 2.

56 *Kirtan* is jointly reciting the name of God, like '*hare* Rama, *hare* Krishna' etc. *Katha* is the telling of his deeds as related in mythology—the favourite *katha* being the *Ramayana*, which often is sung continuously, in which case it is called '*akhanda Ra mayana*'.

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Kumbhakarana waking up from his sleep.[57] The phone came to life. Trains arrived on the dot. Government employees were in their chairs exactly at ten (the Indian office time). Everything and everyone worked. Maybe the people worked out of fear and dread. But they worked. Now, that was a significant revelation. For the first time, after years, the clock was again ticking. And as soon as the emergency was called off, it stopped. The announcer's voice on stations, which had been saying 'right time' for trains, began to boom out the late hours. The telephone operators returned with a sigh of relief to their cups of tea; the office goers to God's benign warming winter sun. Workers returned to their strikes, employees to their agitations, politicians to their processions, pickpockets to their trade, hoarders to their black market and loafers to their street corners. It was the familiar old lassitude back with a bang and flourish.

The moral is distressingly obvious. Good old Kautilya, who knew his India well indeed, was a stickler for *danda*. And India has not changed. With a literacy percentage of 36.17 (in 1981) civic sense must remain at a low ebb for centuries to come. In fact it needs the iron hand of a cop for even educated Indians driving their Rs 60,000 Fiats to follow traffic rules. To bridge this yawning gap between now and the birth of Indian civic sense, Kautilya's, *danda* seems the only way.

It is, of course, only the second best way. It would be exhilarating to see civic sense blossom out naturally in the world's largest democracy, transforming the sense of individual good into that of the corporate good. Unfortunately civic sense is not the kiss of Prince Charming which suddenly wakes up the Sleeping Beauty. It is born painfully from toil and sweat. But if the past is any indication, the chances are that it is going to be a long long wait, and perhaps a fruitless one.

It is not important *how* we put India's battered car of acheveiment back on to the road of progress, provided we *do* it. But two

57 Kumbhakarana was the brother of Ravana, King of the demons. Une a curse of Brahma, the Creator, he slept for six months and remained awake only for a single day. It was quite a hard job awaking him idı between his sleeping period.

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things seem to have daylight clearness. The first is that India needs desperate remedies. We may not be hurtling down a precipice, but we most certainly are on the brink of one. The second is that in the final analysis it is not something from outside (like foreign aid) which will save India from disaster and make the clock tick. It will have to be us, and us alone: for

> 'The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars
> But in ourselves...'[58]

58 Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, i. ii. 134.

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The author is grateful to the following for the illustrations for the book :

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2. Durga Das, *India From Curzon to Nehru and After*, Collins, 1969.

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Index

A

Abdullah, Sheikh, 192,193,197
Act, the Defence of India, 47
Act, the Government of India, 1935, 73,77 *et seq*
administration, the deterioration of Indian, 663-4
Afghan affairs after eg the Second Afghan war, 266-9
Afghan War, the Third, 50-53
Afghan War, the Second, 259-266
Aga Khan, 19,31,61,68
Age of Consent Bill, the, 285,303,304. *See also* Malbari
Ahmed, Sir Syed, 7,12,19,108,109,166
Aksai Chin, 423,426
Ali brothers, the, 61
Ali, Choudhry Mohammed, (successor to Jinnah), 197
Ali, Liaqat, 202
Ambedkar, Bhim Rao, 61,64,500
Andrews, C.F., 292
Antulay, Abdul Rehman, 507,638-9
Arya Samaj, 275
Atomic Energy, Bhabha Research Centre, 655
—Commission, 655
—Tarapur Station of, 656
autonomy in the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, 226
Ayub Khan (of Pakistan), 452

B

Bandarnaika, Srimavo Mrs, (prime minister of Ceylon), 425,447
bande mataram, 6,13,108,118
Bande Mataram (magazine), 121
Banerjee, Surendranath, 5,44
Bangladesh, 388,428,439-44,445,469, 470,471,472,572,643
Bank, World, 204
Bara Hoti, 423
Beijing talks, 430,643
Bengal, partition of, it annulment, 40-2
Besant, Mrs Annie, 230,300
bhadralok, the, 272,275
Bhakra Nangal, 203
Bhakta, Satya (Communist leader), 122
Bhutto, Sir Nawaz, 198
Bhutto, Zulfikar Ali, 434,439-444

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Biar Bet and Chhad Bet (Rann of Kutch conflict), 432-3
Birla, G.D., his five-year plan, 370
Black Acts, the, 49
Bonerjee, W.C., 11,276
Bose, Subhas Chandra, 58,66,75
Boundary Commission, 172,181. *See also* Radcliffe, Sir Cyril
boycott, 14
Brezhnev, Leonid Ilyich (USSR), 457, 459,460

C

Cabinet Mission, the, 179,190,213
Campbell-Johnson, 162,165,175
Cavagnari, 263
Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO), 462
Chamberlain Mision, 261,265
charkha, 56
Chauri Chaura, 56,121,131,321
Chettiar, Singaravelu (Communist leader in Madras), 121
Chhamb (Indo-Pakistan war 1965-6) 435
Chinese war, the, 380
Chintamani, C.V., 227,228
Churchill, 98,99,104,136,137,139,144, 160
civic sense, 525,666-7
civil disobediance, 56,69-73,74,117, 325
commerce, 43
Commission, Indian Statutory, 1930, 228-9
Committee, Indian Sandhurst, the, 57
commonwealth conferences, 333,446, 468
communal electorates in the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, 220-1,226
Congress, Indian National, the, 8,11-17,21,22,23,28,30,36,40,50,56,58, 59,61,65,70,71,72,74,75,79,97,99, 100,101,112,116,118,128,143,147, 149,151,158,165,168,193,271-6,280-328,347,348,354-60,387,636,639
constitution of India, 333,446,468
—amendment of the, 345-6,617-20
—directives of the, 336-8,370-1
—objectives of the, 338-9
Corfield, Sir Conrad, 174,189,190
corruption, universality of, in India, 506,508,664
Cripps, Sir Stafford, 97,98,99,133, 134,136,144,145,155,461
Curzon, 1,5-6,17,22,29,40

D

Dalal, Sir A., 369
Dal Khalsa, 366
Damodar, Ganesh, 10
Dandi march, 62,310. *See also* Gandhi, Mahatma
Dange, Sripad Amrit, 121
Das, C.R., 56,58,59,131,132
demonetisation of bank-notes, 511-2
Desai, Bulabhai, 74,133,140
development blocks (in Indian villages), 493,494
Dhebar, U.N., on Indian administration, 478,481
—on Sardar Patel's dealing with administrators, 480-1
Dhillon, Sardar Ganga Singh, 366
Dhingra, Mohan Lal, 10
Durand Line, 53,267
durbar, the Delhi, 43
Dutt, A.K., 10
Dutt, Romesh, 10
Dyer, General, 49

E

economy, outlook for Indian, in, 1982, 634-5
Edwina (wife of Lord Mountbatten), 164,170
emergency, the state of, 345, 503, 636-8,664-6
encouns, fake (law and order), 523

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

En-lai, Chou, 422,424,425,428,429, 451

F

financing, deficit, 386,397
five-year plans, achievement and failure of the, 400-13
—annual, 412,413
—delays in their formulation and execution, 410-11
—nature of the, 370
—Nehru, Jawaharlal, observation on the, 406
foreign aid, 403,641
foreigners issue, 554-5,559,565,568, 576
fundamental rights in the constitution, 336-8,603,620. *See also* constitution

G

Gandhi, Mahatma, 56,58,59,60,64,65, 66,67,68,69,70,71,72,73,75,76,77, 99,100,101,102,103,104,105,110, 113,115,116,119,120,133,138-40, 141,148,151,169,170,172,175,180, 181,183,191,192,205,206,211,212, 213,233,267,276,283,291,294, 301, 304,310,315-28,486,530,536
gaon samaj, 497,498
garibi hatao (remove poverty), 357, 389,393,515. *See also* poverty in India
Ghose, Rash Behari, 30
Gokhale, 8,12,13,14,15,16,19,27,28, 29 35,36,48,281,283,284-96,311
Great War, the impact of the, 44-6

H

Harijans, the, 73,113,530,532,533,639
Hindu-Muslim relations, 7,17,18,76, 107,110,129,166,167,211,529,536, 537,665
Hindu Patriot, the,5
Home Rule League (set up by Tilak), 299. *See also* Tilak
Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO), 491
Hume, Allan Octavian, 11,22,271

I

Indo-chinese war, 424-5, 427
Indo-Pakistan agreement of 1960,433
Indo-Pakistan war, 1965-6,433-6
Indo-Pakistan war 1971,388,441-2
inflation, 386,389,541,542,602
INA trials, 161
independence day for India (15 August 1947), 174-6
Indian Tamils, 449,643
Indira Gandhi, 357,359,460,464,465, 466,503,507,635,641
—on administration, 482-3
—on the Indian character and the Indian Press, 475
—the emergency, 358. *See also* emergency, the state of
—on foreign aid, 522
—on foreign policy, 419,465,467
—on Indo-Chinese friendship, 430
on Khalistan, 558
industry in India, financing of, 543-4
—nationalisation of, 542
—policy of, 539-40
—production of, 540
—reasons for poor performance of, 649-55
—taxes on, 547
—village and small scale, 543,645-6
inefficiency in Indian administration 628-2,664
International Monetary Fund (IMF), 550,551,552,635,644
Iqbal Mohammed, 167

I

Janata, the, 359,386,387,389,638-40
Jagjit Singh, Dr, 366

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Jallianwala Bagh massacre, 49,233, 312
Jinnah, Mohammed Ali, 57,58,61,64, 76,111,113,116,117,119,138-40,141, 142,146,151,154,155,156-7,160,164, 166,167,171,172,180,182,184,192, 197,212,229,267,310
Joshi, P.C. (Communist leader), 128
judges, controversy regarding the promotion of, 620-1

K

Kakori incident, the, 313,314. *See also* Terrorists
Kanjarkot (Rann of Kutch Conflict), 433
Karachi Agreement on evacuee property, 210
Kashmir, Pakistan's attitude to,445-6
Kesari, the, 12,290,297,298,299,306. *See also* Tilak
khadi, 54,323,324,495
khaki uniform of the Indian police, 524
Khalistan, 366,555-8
Khan, Abul Ghaffar (Frontier Gandhi), 70
Kriplani, Acharya J.B., 347,360

L

Laldenga (leader of the Mizos), 566, 567
Lama, Dalai, 451
land reforms in rural areas in India, 500-2
legal procedure, cumbersomeness of, in Indian, 577
Lilienthal, David E., 202, 203
Lohia, Dr Ram Manohar, 105,361, 364
Lok Sabha, 339,363,365,428
loudspeakers, 393,664,665
Luckhow Pact, 311. *See also* Congress

M

Mahratta (Tilak's magazine), 297
Malaviya, Madan Mohan, 60,72,128, 131
Malbari, 285,305. *See also* Age of Consent Bill
Manchester Guardian, the (on the Indo-Pakistan war), 435
Masani, M.R., 348
massacres in Uttar Pradesh (a province in India), 522
McMahon Line, the, 421,423,425
Mehta, Sir Pherozeshah, 16
Menon, K.P.S., 456
Menon, V.P., 180,185, 190,330,424
Minto-Morley Reforms, 25,32,61,220, 290
the moderates and extremists in Congress, main difference between the, 282-4
Mookerjee, Syama Prasad, 148,351, 353
Morley, 9,10,15,18,24,28,31,33-7,288
Muslim League, the All-India, 20,21, 23,61,76,79,101,109,110,111,127, 138,141,144,147,148,151,152,157, 158,161,167,179,184,192,234
Muslims, 4,5,6,7,8,9,18,19,20,21,24, 27,31,42,50,58,80,107,108,111,112, 118,147,156,166,271,309,353,520, 529,532,537,538
Munshi, K.M., 183

N

Narayan, Jayaprakash, 76,105,185, 357,358,361,499
Narendradeva, Acharya, 76,105,185, 361
Naidu, Mrs Sarojini, 59
Naroji, Dadhabhai, 11,13,109,288
National Planning Commission, the, 370,392,407
Nehru, Jawaharlal, 62,65,72,74,75,76, 99,119,123,125,127,146,147,152, 153,154,155,157,160,169,170,171,

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175,181,184,201,211,212,213,329, 330,333,334,335,347,369,380,420,, 424,425,456,469,495,507,635,664
Nehru, Motilal, 50,55,57,58,61,132
New Leader, the 70
non-alignment in India's foreign policy, 419,420,425,466,467
non-cooperation, 49,50,110
North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, the (NATO), 462

O

O'Dwyer, Sir M., 48,49

P

Pakistan, 99,101,147,148,149,165,166, 168,169,170,171,180,182,193,194, 195,196,197,199,200,201,202,203, 205,206,207,208,209,210,211,321, 331,332,351,353,428,431,432,433, 445,446,453,457,458,459,462,464, 473,538,595,599,642
Pal, Bepin Chandra, 13
panchayats, 486,495,496,497,503,504
panch sheel (principle of Indian foreign policy), 418,429
Patel, Vallabhbhai, 56,169,174,199, 200,201,211,329,330,347,480
Patwardhan, Achyut, 76
per capita income, 401
Point 84 (Rann of Kutch conflict), 433
political upheaval, reasons for, 2-11
Poona Pact, the, 72. *See also* Congress
population rise and its control, 408-10,415-6,519-20,623-5,644,645,646, 661
poverty in India, 401,513-4,644,664
Prasad, Rajendra, 57,158
press, the Indian, 475,608-9
prices, 386,388,399,400,402,541,542, 602,632-3,644,664. *See also garibi hatao*
Prince of Wales, his visit, 55-6

Q

Quit India movement, the, 100-107, 127,133

R

Radhakrishnan, S., 456
Radcliffe, Sir Cyril, 181,201,431,469, 571. *See also* Boundary Commission
Rai, Lajpat, 30,55,60,283
Rajagopalachari, C, 57,58,138,348
Rajya Sabha, 339
Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS), 351
Reagan, Roland, (USA), 464
Rehman, Abdur, 264,266,267
reorganisation of the Indian states, 598-9
Round Table Conferences, 64-6,67, 68-9,71,73,77,168,235
Rowlatt Acts, 110,319
Roy, Bidhan Chander, 74
Roy, M.N., 106,120,121,125,370

S

Samastipur, 358
Sampurnanand, 121
Sapru, Tej Bahadur, 64,114,134,148, 229
Satyagraha, 48,57,110,318,319,320
Savarkar, V.D., (Veer), 10,113,129, 313,352
scheduled castes and tribes, 530,531, 532. *See also Harijans*
secularism, 536
Seven Sisters of the North, 559
Shah, K.T,, 370
Shastri, Lal Bahadur, 64,380,435·9, 507
Sher Ali, 258,259
Sikkim, accession to the Indian Union, 477
Simla conference, the, 141-3,179
Simon Commission, the, 60-1,63-4, 67,117,159

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Singh, Bhagat, 66,67,313
smuggling, 513,522
socialisation, 407,515,628-9,648
Soltan (magazine), 6,7
South-East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO), 456,462
space programme of India, 656-60
—its objectives, 659
space programme of Pakistan, 659
Srimavo-Indira pact (between India and Ceylon), 448
states, Indian, and paramountcy, 186-201
Statesman, the, 42,72,113,157,293,522, 523
Swadeshi, 8,13,16,17,108,322,323,324
Swaraj (self-government), 13,16,23, 60,299
—*purna* (complete independence), 65
Syndicate Congress, 357. *See also* Congress

T

Tagore, Rabindranath, 49-50
Tandon, Purushottamdas, 347,354
taxation, increase over the years, 595-6, 562
terrorists, the, 311-15
Tilak, 8,12,13,14,15,29,30,283,284, 286,290,296-311,308-11
Times of India, the, 70,298,302
Times, the, 31,37,432-3,435
train robberies in India, 522
Trashkent declaration, the, 436-7, 436-7,438,439
twenty point programme, 358
—revival of the, 640

U

unemployment, 389,393,408,630-1, 661
Union, Girni Kamgar (Red Flag), 124,125
untouchables, 529

V

Vakil, C.N., 369
Vigokot (Rann of Kutch conflict), 433
Visvesvaraya, Sir M., 369

W

White Paper, 235
women, Gandhi's views on, 325-7. *See also* Gandhi, Mahatma

Y

Young India (magazine of Mahatma Gandhi), 56,66,67. *See also* Gandhi, Mahatma
Young Turks, the (a branch of the Congress), 360. *See also* Congress
Youth Janata, 360

Z

Zafrullah, Sir, 203,206
zila parishads, 486,497

Note : For words and subjects not listed in the index, *see* chapter headings and sub-headings. The index does not cover the introduction.

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